

ESSAYS AND STUDIES

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C O N T E N T S

	PAGE
I. CLASSICAL AND ENGLISH VERSE-STRUCTURE	7
R. C. TREVELYAN.	
II. KEATS'S APPROACH TO THE CHAPMAN SONNET	26
B. IFOR EVANS.	
III. ENGLISH POETS AND THE ABSTRACT WORD	53
GEORGE RYLANDS.	
IV. CONJECTURAL HISTORY, OR SHAKESPEARE'S <i>HENRY VIII</i>	85
PETER ALEXANDER.	
V. TENSE	121
J. M. WATTIE.	
VI. JOHN DONNE AND CONTEMPORARY PREACHERS	144
JOHN SPARROW.	
VII. A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY MANUSCRIPT OF POEMS BY DONNE AND OTHERS .	179
H. HARVEY WOOD.	

CLASSICAL AND ENGLISH VERSE- STRUCTURE

WHEN in his old age Milton reprinted his *Miscellaneous Poems*, one of the additions he made to the book was a translation of the Fifth Ode of Horace, to which he prefixed this statement: 'Rendred almost word for word without Rhyme according to the Latin Measure, as near as the Language will permit.' I will read the first two stanzas in the English and then in the Latin, so that we may see how far Milton's claim was justified.

What slender Youth bedew'd with liquid odours
Courts thee on Roses in some pleasant Cave,
Pyrrha, for whom bind'st thou
In wreaths thy golden Hair,
Plain in thy neatness? O how oft shall he
On Faith and changed Gods complain: and Seas
Rough with black winds and storms
Unwonted shall admire . . .

Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa
Perfusus liquidis urget odoribus
Grato, Pyrrha, sub antro?
Cui flavam religas comam

Simplex munditiis? Heu quotiens fidem
Mutatosque deos flebit et aspera
Nigris aequora ventis
Emirabitur insolens . . .

Opinions may well differ as to the merits of this translation. To me, it seems to be indeed admirable in diction, phrasing and movement, and almost wholly worthy both of Horace and of Milton—almost, but not quite. Can it be truly said that Milton has rendered it 'according to the Latin measure, as near as the language will permit'? To be sure in both Latin and English there are four lines to each stanza, and the first two lines in both are longer than the last two. But there the rhythmical resemblance stops. The line 'What

slender youth bedew'd with liquid odours' makes no attempt to be a metrical translation of 'Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa', any more than 'Pyrrha, for whom bind'st thou In wreaths thy golden hair' is an equivalent to 'Grato, Pyrrha, sub antro? Cui flavam religas comam?' The stanza thus invented by Milton has indeed been a memorable addition to the resources of English lyrical poetry, as was shown later on by the exquisite use which Collins put it to in his *Ode to Evening*, and Clare in his *Ode to Autumn*. Yet the Latin stanza, with its complex and delicate structure, is not only in itself the more beautiful metrical pattern, but also the more expressive poetical instrument.

Wonders may be performed in any art by the simplest means; and Milton's predecessors had not been prevented by the comparatively simple and uniform structure of English verse from producing a great deal of delightful lyrical poetry, such as the songs of Shakespeare, Herrick, and Campion, and of the Elizabethan Song-books. But the metrical traditions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were such that an English Sappho or Horace would have been an impossibility, and still more so an English Pindar or lyric Aeschylus.

In order to justify such assertions, I shall have to wander somewhat far afield down perilous bypaths of metrical history and controversy. I must try to explain, as briefly as I can, what appears to me to be the fundamental nature of English verse; and when I have shown in what way the nature of English and of Classical verse are different, I shall discuss to what extent this difference may have proved a limitation to our poets, and shall describe the experiments that have been made by some of them, first in the sixteenth century, and afterwards in our own days, to introduce new methods and principles suggested by Greek and Latin quantitative verse.

The metre of all classical poetry was based upon quantity, that is to say, the metrical design was consciously determined by the length and shortness of the syllables, and not by stress or pitch or rime. Now the number of clearly distinguishable rhythmic figures or phrases that can be developed by such a quantitative system is very considerable. Out of these

the Greek poets were able to fashion many various lyrical measures, and by skilfully combining and contrasting different metres they could build up structures of very complex design. Their lyrical poetry was intended to be sung, not spoken; and so these intricate verse-forms would be made more easily comprehensible by the emphasis of the music, and often by dancing movements. But even where, as in the Odes of Horace, classical poetry was meant not to be sung, but spoken, the metrical complexity inside each line is greater than in any normal English lyric.

The reasons for this are not difficult to see. To begin with, the predominant verse-structure in English poetry, from Chaucer's time to Milton's, and even until later, was what may conveniently be called duple time, which is most familiar to us in the form of the ten-syllabled blank verse line or the rimed decasyllabic. But whatever the number of syllables in the line, we shall find on analysis that they may be grouped in feet or bars each normally containing two syllables. Every bar normally begins with a stressed or accented syllable, and the time-space between any two of these stresses is equal to that between any other two, or at least is felt to be equal. No doubt such a general statement is over-simple and requires qualification. The bars do not always contain two syllables, but sometimes three, or only one. Often too an accent may not occur in the expected position at the beginning of a bar; or else it may occur in an unexpected position; in which cases something of the nature of musical syncopation will generally be found to take place. But in spite of such irregularities we always are, or should be, aware of the underlying duple time.

Here they are, my fifty men and women.

To be or not to be, that is the question.

But laid his comely head

Down as upon a bed.

—all such lines, whatever their irregularities and their relative lengths, are based upon the same duple time. The words and phrases are moulded, or rather spaced out and imperceptibly

stretched and contracted upon this ideated metrical framework, and so acquire new energies and expressiveness, which they would not have possessed in ordinary prose speech.

Tennyson called Virgil's hexameter 'the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man'. It would be equally true to say that the subtlest measure that ever moulded human speech was this English duple time, especially in the form of blank verse, as used by such masters as Shakespeare, Milton, and Keats. But the subtlety and expressive force of blank verse, and rimed verse of the same type, depend upon this underlying uniformity of time-structure, upon which syllables of very varying length and accent can be moulded and modified; and such a uniform metrical structure, though admirable for dramatic, narrative, or elegiac purposes, is by no means a satisfactory medium for complicated lyrical poems, where changes and contrasts of rhythm within the stanza, and even within the line, add so greatly to the possibilities of verse architecture, and thus to the range of emotional effects.

The other important rhythm in English poetry is triple time. This was seldom used by the Elizabethans, except occasionally in lyrics such as Shakespeare's:

Merrily, merrily shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

In the eighteenth century it was found to be a convenient medium for light verse by such poets as Swift and Goldsmith.

Here Reynolds is laid, and, to tell you my mind,
He has not left a wiser or better behind.
His pencil was striking resistless and grand;
His manners were gentle complying and bland.

But it was the Romantic poets, led by Coleridge and Shelley, who first exploited the possibilities of this rhythm for serious poetry, slowing it down and giving it dignity and variety, as in *Christabel* and *The Sensitive Plant*.

And the hyacinth purple, and white and blue,
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
It was felt like an odour within the sense.

In Victorian times this rhythm became almost our commonest lyrical metre, easily modulating into duple time, and adaptable to lines of various lengths.

These, so far as I can see, are the two fundamental rhythms underlying all English poetry. They are generally not difficult to recognize, and most poems are written throughout in one or other of them. But sometimes their disguises, and their modulations into and out of each other, are not so easy to detect. Shelley's *Ode to Night*, for example, begins in triple time, but soon drifts into duple time, and then back again into triple.

Swiftly walk o'er the western wave,
 Spirit of Night!
 Out of the misty eastern cave,
 Where, all the long and lone daylight,
 Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
 That make thee terrible and dear,—
 Swift be thy flight!

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,
 Star-inwrought!
 Blind with thy hair the eyes of Day;
 Kiss her until she be wearied out,
 Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
 Touching all with thine opiate wand—
 Come, long-sought!

Here—

Swiftly walk o'er the western wave,
 Spirit of Night!

is clearly in triple time. But by the time we have come to

Where, all the long and lone daylight,
 Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear

we have modulated into duple time. But when we reach 'Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land', if not in the line before, we find ourselves back in triple time.

Here then, in this marvellous poem, can it be that we have found some sort of equivalent to the internal rhythmical complexity of a Greek lyric? Yes, perhaps—but with important differences. In the first place the English metre is not

quantitative; that is to say, the lengths of the syllables composing the feet or bars have no fixed proportional relation to each other. The six first feet—Swiftly | walk o'er the | western | wave, | Spirit of | Night—are equal bars of triple time; but only two of the bars contain three syllables; the other four contain two syllables, or only one. And all these syllables are of very varied lengths and mutual proportions. Yet, for all their irregularity, they suggest the triple rhythm, and are dominated by it in turn. How different it is with Greek metre! There, every syllable is felt to have a definite proportional relation to every other. As a general rule, a short is half the length of a long; in any case the quantity of each is fixed, and known, and felt. The metrical pattern is precise and unmistakable, and we are at once conscious of any modulation into another rhythm.

Now in Shelley's poem the structure of the stanza is determined merely by the number of equidistant stresses in each line, and by the relative length of the lines, as punctuated by the rimes. The mutual proportions of the syllables, and the changes from one time to another, though of the greatest aesthetic importance, have no structural value at all.

In fact the main instrument by which our poets have been able to construct more or less intricate stanzas, is rime, which for so long has been the governing force in European poetry. Rime indeed should not be looked upon as a mere ornament. Its chief function is to delineate and emphasize verse-structure. It was the skilful use of rime, learnt from the Italian poets, that rendered possible not only the art of the Elizabethan song-writers and sonneteers, but the splendid canzone forms used by Spenser in his *Prothalamium* and *Epithalamium*, and the lovely stanzas of Milton's *Nativity Hymn*. The heritage of this tradition became one of the main glories of our poetry, culminating, but by no means dying out, in the Odes of Keats and Shelley.

Nevertheless, though much great English poetry has been written in riming stanzas, it seems possible that rime may not have been an altogether beneficial influence upon our poets. The Greeks, who knew not rime, were compelled to

organize their poetic forms by means of internal rhythm alone. We, born and bred incorrigible rimesters, have tended to neglect variety of internal rhythm, and to rely too exclusively upon the formative power of rime. The result, so it seems to me, has been, that whereas the Greeks were supreme masters in almost every species of lyrical poetry, whether on a large or on a small scale, the range of our successes has been far more limited. We have had many masters of the song and short lyric, and we have the *Ode to Autumn* and *Adonais*, which, though very great poems, are yet perhaps almost as much elegiac as lyrical. But as I have already suggested, we have had no English Sappho, no Horace, no Pindar, no Aeschylus, no lyric Aristophanes even.

Though this point of view may be open to dispute, we know at least that Milton did not consider that our language in his day permitted him to translate Horace into a metre at all closely resembling the original. Furthermore, when at the end of his life Milton designed his *Samson Agonistes*, and, to use his own words, introduced the Chorus after the Greek manner, however nobly he was inspired by the Spirit of Greek Tragedy, and great poetry as his choruses most assuredly are, he yet made hardly any attempt to discover an equivalent to the variety and complexity of an Aeschylean or Sophoclean Ode. His method was merely to write blank verse in lines of varying lengths, with occasional rimes, and with the occasional omission of the syllable preceding the first stress, so that in some nineteen instances the line is in falling instead of rising rhythm. But a careful analysis will show that there is no single line in the whole play which is not written in duple time.

Nevertheless Milton must have been quite well aware that during the latter half of the sixteenth century a serious and persistent attempt had been made by distinguished men of letters and poets, such as Ascham, Sidney, Spenser, and Campion, to break the tyranny of rime and syllabic verse, and to impose upon our poetry a quantitative prosody, just as Ennius had once successfully imposed Greek metres and scansion upon the refractory Latin language. But this gallant

forlorn-hope had failed disastrously, and Milton, so far as we know, ignored it, and made no similar attempt of his own. He had other work to do, and could waste no time upon such doubtful experiments.

The chief cause of this failure to naturalize quantitative prosody was a fatal lack of any consistent and rational method of determining the quantities of English syllables. The science of phonetics did not yet exist; and in the absence of phonetics the experimenters had each to rely upon the arbitrary criterion of their own untrained ears, which had never learnt even the elementary distinction between accent and quantity. Thus the first specimen of English hexameters known to us is this couplet by Ascham's friend, Thomas Watson, Master of St. John's, Cambridge :

All travelers do gladly report great praise of Ulysses,

For that he knew many men's manners, and saw many cities.

The prosody of the first line is correct enough; but in the second line the first syllables of *manners* and *cities* are intended to be long; yet they are obviously both short, though both are accented.

Such fundamental errors pervade every one of these Elizabethan experiments. Yet Sidney, Spenser, and Campion were true poets; and Campion assuredly had as sensitive an ear for the harmonies of traditional English verse as any poet ever possessed. Perhaps for that very reason he found it impossible to think consistently in terms of rigid quantity, in default of any clear phonetic principles to guide him. Yet he made a valiant effort, and was intelligent enough to perceive that the doubled consonant in such words as *attend*, *appease*, and *oppose*, does not necessarily lengthen the preceding vowel. But he was misled by the fallacy that a stress generally lengthens the syllable it accents, and so fell into such absurdities as to consider the first syllables of *diligent* and *spirit* to be long.

After Campion the classicizing movement became discredited and moribund, although, as Mr. Omond has pointed out, the following passage occurs in Ben Jonson's *English Grammar*, published as late as 1640: 'Here order would

require to speake of the *Quantitie* of *Syllables* [syllables], their special *Prerogative* among the *Latines* and *Greekes*: whereof so much as is constant, and derived from *Nature* hath beene handled already. The other which growes by *Position*, and placing of letters, as yet (not through *default* of our *Tongue*, being able enough to receive it, but our owne *carelessness*, being negligent to give it) is ruled by no Art. The principall cause whereof seemeth to be this; because our *Verses* and *Rythmes* [rimes] (as it is almost with all other people, whose *Language* is spoken at this day) are *naturall*, and such whereof Aristotle speaketh, ἐκ τῶν αὐτοσχεδιασμάτων, that is, made of a *naturall*, and *voluntarie* composition, without regard to the *Quantity* of *Syllables*.

‘This would ask a larger time and field, then is here given, for the examination: but since I am assigned to this Province, that it is the *lot* of my *age*, after thirty yeares conversation with men, to be *elementarius Senex* (an old man teaching rudiments): I will promise, and obtaine so much of my selfe, as to give, in the heele of the booke, some spurre and incitement to that which I so reasonably seeke. Not that I would have the *vulgar* and *practis’d* way of making abolished and abdicated (being both sweet and delightful, and much taking the ear), but, to the end our *Tongue* may be equall to those of the renowned Countries, *Italy* and *Greece*, touching this particular.’

Unfortunately Ben Jonson never fulfilled this promise, and it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that Tennyson, Clough, and others became interested in the problem, and began tentatively to experiment and theorize. But by far the most interesting and hopeful experiment has been made by Mr. Robert Bridges, who, developing and correcting the theories of his late friend, W. J. Stone, has written a considerable amount of quantitative verse, chiefly in the form of hexameters, which, whether or no we consider it entirely successful, at least deserves serious attention and criticism.¹

¹ This paper was written a few months before the death of Mr. Bridges. In the *neo-miltonics* of his *Testament of Beauty* he showed himself to be

Now Mr. Bridges has seen clearly that, if we wish to write quantitative verse that shall be readable, and have an intelligible structure, two conditions are necessary: first, we must have a definite theory of quantity, based so far as possible on phonetic facts; and secondly, we must not allow ourselves to be disconcerted when we find that accents do not always fall upon long syllables, and we must even welcome the fact that the speech-accent will often not correspond with the metrical ictus, or ideated accent of the verse. I can best illustrate these points by reading a short passage from the first of Mr. Bridges' hexameter poems, published in 1903.

Yea, set aside with these all Nature's beauty, the wildwood's
 Flow'ry domain, the flushing, soft-crowding loveliness of Spring,
 Lazy Summer's burning dial, the serenely solemn spells
 Of Sibylline Autumn, with gay-wing'd plenty departing;
 All fair change, whether of seasons or bright recurrent day,
 Morning or eve; the divine night's wonderful empyrean;
 High noon's melting azure, his thin cloud-country, the land-
 scape
 Mountainous or maritime, blue calms of midsummer Ocean,
 Broad corn-grown champaign gold-waving in invisible wind;
 Wide-water'd pasture, with shade of whispering aspen;
 All whereby Nature winneth our love, fondly appearing
 As to caress her children, or all that in exaltation
 Lifteth aloft our hearts to an unseen glory beyond her.

Here, in the first place, we shall find no false quantities, none at least that violate Mr. Bridges' rules, though we may sometimes, if we think fit, dissent from his ruling. The first syllables of the words *flushing*, *Summer's*, *azure*, *maritime*, and *winneth* are all considered by him to be short, though they are all accented. On the other hand he ends his hexameters with such phrases as 'serenely solemn spells' and 'invisible wind', where the final syllables of *solemn* and *invisible*, though by nature short, are lengthened by position,

still a courageous and successful metrical innovator, even to the very end of his life. Not long before his last illness he told me that, though well satisfied with his latest experiment, he yet thought that there were finer and more splendid poetic possibilities in the more difficult medium of the quantitative hexameter, which had been his earlier favourite.

being each followed by a word beginning by a consonant. In the second place it should be noted that out of thirteen lines there are only four in which the speech-accent does not at some point conflict with the metrical ictus. We are not intended to read:

Lazy Summér's burning díal, the serenely solémn spells
Of Sibyllíne Autúmn,

but:

Lazy Súmmer's búrning díal, the serenely sólemn spélls
Of Sibyllíne Aútumn.

Any of us familiar with Virgil will recognize a similar accentual pattern in such lines as:

Hic dómus est ínquit vóbis. Jam tempus ági rés
and:

Corde dólór trísti, gáudet cognomíne terra.

But familiarity with the Latin hexameter ought not, I hope, to be necessary in order to be aware of the metrical structure, and enjoy the delicate eloquence and beauty of these English lines. We are not disconcerted or confused when in the blank verse of Shakespeare or Milton we find that the speech-accent is in frequent conflict with the metrical ictus.

A mind not to be changed by time or place
and:

Before thy fellows, ambitious to win
are abnormal lines, but not in the least difficult to read or enjoy. Here is a remarkable case of inverted stress from Shakespeare. In answer to Troilus's question:

Why was my Cressid then so hard to win?

Cressid says:

Hard to seém won; but I wás won, my lord,
With the first word that ever . . .

No one, who can read at all, would misread this line:

Hard tó seem wón; but Í was wón, my lórd.

Yet that misreading corresponds with the ideated metrical structure against which the words are counterpointed. But if the line is read with its natural rhetorical emphasis, we are able to understand both the sense and the metre without any difficulty. The expressiveness of the phrasing depends upon the fact that the accented syllables *seem* and *was* are placed just where the metrical accents are *not* expected.

If we can welcome such displacements of accent in blank verse, why should we not welcome them in other verse-forms? The chief defect that some of us find in the accentual hexameters of Longfellow and Clough is not that they have no resemblance at all to classical hexameters (being in fact six-stressed lines in ordinary triple time); nor is it merely their scabrous, corrugated texture; it is rather that the speech-accent is never by any fortunate chance in conflict with the metrical ictus. In a long poem this soon becomes intolerable. Even Swinburne's dactyls or anapaests (however we may choose to misname them), though no doubt far more smoothly written, are, it seems to me, just as much liable to the same criticism. The remorseless insistence upon the beat of the verse makes them inexpressive, unsubtle, and monotonous, despite all their energy and virtuosity. Whatever may be the faults of Mr. Bridges' hexameters, they do not lie in this direction. Owing to his scrupulous observation of quantity, he is able to make the speech-accent frequently conflict with the metrical beat, without obscuring the structure of the verse, and so can avoid monotony, and gain greatly in beauty and power of expression.

My own criticism of Mr. Bridges' experiment is that his conception of quantity seems sometimes to be too rigid and logical. For example such a line as

Though I lack the wizard Darwin's scientific insight

appears to me difficult to read and somewhat broken-backed, because the first two syllables of *scientific*, though both long according to his rules, are, in ordinary speech, more short than long. It is interesting to find that several years later Mr. Bridges reconsidered his rule about vowels long by

nature which are immediately followed by another vowel, and would now consider the first vowel in *scientific* to be short. And in his Virgilian translation, published in 1909, he ends a hexameter with the word *lamentation*, thus treating the *n* as a semi-vowel, and therefore allowing the syllable *en* to remain short before a consonant. So he would probably now admit that the first two syllables of *scientific* were neither of them certainly long, and that the verse might be considered faulty. This shows that he has the candour and good sense to revise his rules, and his practice, when he finds that they conflict with phonetic facts. Any poet wishing to write quantitative verse would be well advised to use Mr. Bridges' rules as a starting-point; but he should be ready to modify them whenever his experience and practice prove it to be desirable.

One of the chief advantages of change in metrical technique, and the exploitation of a novel poetic medium, is that new rhythmical forms suggest and invite new diction and new methods of phrasing. To illustrate this, I will read one more passage from Mr. Bridges' hexameters. He is contrasting the progressively successful efforts of modern science to combat the bacilli of disease with the helplessness of medieval medicine.

With what wildly directed attack, what an armory ill-judged,
Has he, (alas, poor man,) with what cumbrous machination
Sought to defend himself from their Lilliputian onslaught;
Aye discharging around him, in obscure night, at a venture,
Ev'ry missile which his despair confus'dly imagin'd;
His simples, compounds, specifics, chemical therapeutics,
Juice of plants, whatever was nam'd in lordly Salerno's
Herbaries and gardens, vipers, snails, all animal filth,
Incredible quackeries, the pretentious jugglery of knaves,
Green electricities, saints' bones and priestly anointings.
Fools! that oppose his one scientific intelligent hope!
Grant us an hundred years, and man shall hold in abeyance
These foul distempers, and with this world's benefactors
Shall PASTEUR obtain the reward of saintly devotion,
His crown heroic, who fought not destiny in vain.

Now not only the vocabulary with its picturesque poly-

syllables—*Lilliputian*, *therapeutics*, *electricities*—not only such felicities of phrasing as

Incredible quackeries, the pretentious jugglery of knaves, but the whole movement and architecture of that long complex sentence, are at once suggested and made possible by this new medium which Mr. Bridges has discovered and is exploiting. A similar effect might no doubt be achieved in other verse forms, but not, I think, so easily or so happily. Furthermore, in his renderings of Virgil and Homer, Mr. Bridges has come far nearer both to the form and spirit of his originals than any rival translator, and at the same time he has created a living English verse-form that is capable of expressing a new kind of poetic beauty, different in many ways from the beauty that is natural to blank verse, or to the other forms already familiar to us. I will read a passage from his Virgil (633–47).

Then together they trace i' the drooping dimness a foot-path,
Whereby, faring across, they arrive at th' arches of iron.
Aeneas stept into the porch, and duly besprinkling
His body with clear water affixt his bough to the lintel;
And, having all perform'd at length with ritual exact,
They came out on a lovely pleasance, that dream'd-of oasis,
Fortunate isle, the abode o' the blest, their fair Happy Wood-
land.

Here is an ampler sky, those meads ar' azur'd by a gentler
Sun than th' Earth, an' a new starworld their darkness adorneth.

Some were matching afoot their speed on a grassy arena,
In playful combat some wrestling upon the yellow sand,
Part in a dance-rhythm or poetry's fine phantasy engage;
While full-toga'd anear their high-priest musical Orpheus
Bade his prime sev'n tones in varied harmony discourse,
Now with finger, anon sounding with an ivory plectrum.

I am afraid that the pleasant task of advocating Mr. Bridges' experiments has led me rather far astray from my original theme, which was an enquiry into the relative failure of English lyrical poetry to achieve the richness and splendour of the Greeks. If then such an ambition be worth pursuing,

how far is it likely that the adoption of a quantitative prosody would help our poets to attain it? I am myself very doubtful whether a rigid quantitative system would be a suitable method either for translating the Odes of Aeschylus and Pindar, or for constructing new and original English forms, inspired by their example. Conflicts of accent with the metrical beat, which, as I have tried to explain, are so useful, and even necessary a feature in a verse-form like the hexameter, with its fixed and familiar structure, would probably become a cause of confusion and obscurity of outline in poems of an intricate, irregular pattern, built up out of changing and contrasted rhythms. My own opinion, for what it may be worth, is that for such a purpose the structure would have to be mainly indicated and expressed by accent, and that quantity would play a subordinate, though still an important part. Careful attention to the weight and lightness of syllables would be even more necessary than it is in the writing of blank verse; but a strict and consistent observation of quantity would be a superfluous, and perhaps an embarrassing luxury. Rime might sometimes be used with discretion, but should no longer be the chief instrument for indicating and emphasizing structure.

As an illustration of the method I am suggesting, I will take the liberty of reading my own translation of an Ode from the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus. No one knows better than myself that great poetry is untranslatable. All that can be claimed for my rendering is that it conveys the meaning as closely as I am able, and that it attempts, however imperfectly, to reproduce the form and phrasing of the Greek, and to suggest the various changes and contrasts of pace and rhythm.

The Chorus of Furies have tracked down Orestes to the Temple of Athena at Athens, where they discover him clinging to the image of the Goddess. This is their *δέσμιος ὕμνος*, or binding hymn. First comes an anapaestic introduction; then follows the main Ode, which consists of four pairs of strophes or stanzas in various rhythms, the first three pairs being divided by ephymnions or refrains.

CHORUS

Come now, our choric dance form we, for now
 'Tis time to reveal
 The destroying charm of our music,
 Expounding the functions of this our band
 To administer destiny among men.
 Righteous and just we deem is our justice.
 That man who displays hands pure without stain,
 Ne'er do we launch our anger against him :
 Unscathed his days he fulfilleth.
 But when having sinned, like unto this man,
 He hides from us hands that are guilt-stained,
 Then for the slain true witnesses are we,
 And in wrath we arise, stern, unappeasable,
 To exact a revenge for the blood spilt.

Mother who didst bear me (O Mother Str. 1
 Night) to be judge of those who see and who see not,
 Hear : for he, Leto's whelp, from my rights fain would eust me,
 Stealing yon cowering
 Creature, mine though he be,
 Sealed thus by a mother's blood.

Over his death-dedicate head Ephymnion 1
 Sing we the spell, madding the brain,
 Scattering sense and bewildering,
 Our ErInuan litany,
 Binding fast the will, a chant
 Lyreless, withering men away.

This the eternal function which changeless Ant. 1
 Fate as she span decreed should be our own : all men,
 Whoso incurs wantonly guilt of foul kindred bloodshed,
 Such we haunt, till beneath
 Earth he pass. Nay, in death
 He shall still be none too free.

Over his death-dedicate head Ephymnion 1
 Sing we the spell, madding the brain,
 Scattering sense and bewildering,
 Our ErInuan litany,
 Binding fast the will, a chant
 Lyreless, withering men away.

Such, when we rose into being, the functions assigned us. Str. 2
 Let no Immortal encroach on our rights ; for of them there is
 None shall share in our banquets.
 In white festival robes neither portion nor lot is allowed me.
 For destruction is my joy,

Ruin and wreck, when in the home Ephymnion 2
 Denizen Strife slayeth a friend.
 Then in his track thus dō we speed :
 Strong though he be, we wear him down,
 Ere on his hands the blood be dried.

Eager to lighten the Gods of this burdensome office, Ant. 2
 Therefore we pray that herein they should hold them exempted,
 Nor claim such jurisdiction.
 Zeus deigns not to converse with a tribe that provokes his
 abhorrence,
 Blood-bedabbled like our own.

Str. 3
 Man's proud glories, yea though they mount to the heavens,
 Shrink to the earth and dissolve in contempt and dishonour,
 Swept by the funeral black of our robes, trodden under
 Our malignant dancing feet.

For with a leap, nimble and strong, Ephymnion 3
 Down from on high, heavily down,
 With cruel foot crush we his crown.
 Swift though he run, yet shall he sprawl,
 Tripped and snared to destruction.

Though he falls, yet blind in his madness he knows not ; Ant. 3
 Such is the murk of pollution that hovers around him.
 Misty and black is the gloom that envelops the house,
 As rumour tells with many a groan.

For so it stands. Skilled in craft Str. 4
 And sure to act, ne'er forgetting
 Evil deeds, dread powers
 Inexorable to prayers of men,
 We claim an office unhonoured and scorned
 By Gods above. A sinless murk
 Divideth them and us,
 Shadowy pathless and rugged, alike
 For seeing and for sightless eyes.

What mortal then quaileth not
 In awe and dread, when he hears
 Our ordinance, stablished
 By Fate, and by the Gods assigned
 In perpetuity? Yea from of old
 This privilege hath been ours. No lack
 Of honour do we meet,
 Though beneath earth is our dwelling appointed,
 And in sun-forsaken gloom.

Ant. 4

You will see that Aeschylus has here used no less than five very different metres. First comes the energetic anapaestic prelude, then the first pair of strophes with their slow gloomy spondees and cretics, interrupted by the savage energy of the paeonic refrain. The second and third pairs are both written in majestically sweeping dactyls; and then, in complete contrast, come the broken iambs of the final strophes, solemn, yet sinister and menacing.

Not many years ago, in England and America, certain interesting attempts were made to write a free verse without any apparent rhythmical structure whatever. The most successful of these poems had of course their own form beneath a façade of irregularity. The movement had the misfortune to become fashionable, and soon degenerated into a facile academicism of mere formlessness. But few even of the genuine experiments have been entirely satisfactory; and in so far as they have failed, I think the chief reason has been something of this kind. The power of verse to remould and vivify language depends largely upon the reader's expectation of rhythmical regularity. If there are changes of rhythm, they must be clear and immediately perceptible. Now when there is a complete absence of regularity, there can be no expectation of rhythm, and so verse must lose much of its subtlety and of its power to mould words and increase their expressiveness. Such poetry approximates to prose, where the natural rhythms of speech dominate unmodified. What I would suggest is that from the study and example of Greek lyrical forms we might learn the secret of an organized and comprehensible irregularity, and at the

same time discover many new rhythmical possibilities in our language. The result might be a verse that was free without being anarchical, and could mould and dominate words as powerfully as the older, more uniform metrical patterns.

Whether English lyrical poetry is likely to develop in such a direction is indeed doubtful. It depends upon the poets themselves; and poets are a wilful and intractable race. It is no use pointing out to them the easy and obvious path to the Pierian fountain. They will find out their own paths for themselves; or more probably Helicon and Parnassus, the classical haunts of the Daughters of Memory, will have no attractions for them. They will doubtless have quite other hills to climb, more intoxicating springs to drink from, and more inspiring Muses to frequent and worship.

R. C. TREVELYAN.

KEATS'S APPROACH TO THE CHAPMAN SONNET¹

I

IN the autumn of 1816, Mr. Alsager, a financial correspondent of *The Times*, lent Charles Cowden Clarke 'a beautiful copy of the folio edition of Chapman's translation of Homer'.² Cowden Clarke at once summoned his old school-fellow, John Keats, to share the adventure of exploring this volume. Not only was Keats an old school friend, but Cowden Clarke, as a senior pupil and as the head master's son at the Enfield school, had given Keats some of his first lessons in literature and had early aroused in him an interest in poetry. In 1816 John Keats was a medical student in the London hospitals and lived with his brothers in the Poultry. He seized upon Clarke's invitation to see a book that he had often wished to possess and on an evening in October, 1816,³ walked over to Clerkenwell where Cowden Clarke was staying. So excited were the two young men that instead of reading Chapman straight through they plunged here and there, picking out 'famousest passages' as Cowden Clarke called them. They read on through the night until dawn, and then Keats set out to walk back from Clerkenwell to the Poultry. Cowden Clarke did not rise early next morning, but when he came down to breakfast he found on the table

¹ This paper was read before the Sheffield Branch of the English Association in the Firth Hall, The University, Sheffield, 25 Feb. 1930. It has been largely re-written and a number of notes and references inappropriate to a lecture have been added.

² Details of this loan and of the evening that Cowden Clarke and Keats spent together were first set out by Cowden Clarke. *Recollections of Keats*, *Atlantic Monthly*, 1861.

³ I assume the date October, 1816, from the evidence of Colvin (*Keats*, 1917, pp. 40, 41 note). The argument is not changed if a date in the autumn of 1815 is assumed. The relationship suggested below between the sonnet and *Sleep and Poetry* seems to confirm Colvin's date.

an envelope in Keats's handwriting. This was the sole enclosure:

On first looking into Chapman's Homer.¹
 Much have I travell'd in the Realms of Gold,
 And many goodly states, and kingdoms seen ;
 Round many Western islands have I been
 Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
 Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
 Which deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his Demesne ;
 Yet could I never judge what Men could mean,
 Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold.

Then felt I like some watcher of the Skies
 When a new Planet swims into his ken ;
 Or like stout Cortez, when with wond'ring eyes
 He star'd at the Pacific, and all his Men
 Look'd at each other with a wild surmise
 Silent upon a Peak in Darien.

Seldom have the conditions under which a poetical work is created and conceived been so closely circumscribed. The genetic impulse from which the sonnet arose could not have existed in Keats's mind previously, for he had not seen a complete rendering of Chapman's translation of Homer until that evening in Clarke's room. The actual composition must have taken place between five and ten o'clock on the following morning, probably on that dawn walk from Clerkenwell to the Poultry. All reference to books and sources was severely limited: the sonnet had to depend on the memories and associations already existent in Keats's mind. The MS. of the first version, given above, is written without revision except for the correction of a few scribal errors. It has the appearance, too, of being the first draft on paper, for Keats has drawn a marginal scrawl round each quatrain to see that the rhymes are in place. The evidence would indicate that

¹ This version of the sonnet is taken from the reproduction of the MS. in Amy Lowell's *Keats*, 1924 (vol. i, facing p. 180). The MS. was then in the possession of the author. The MS. of the revised version of the poem is in the Morgan Collection.

he had accomplished the sonnet as he walked home, and that all that was left for him to do when he reached the Poultry was to see that it looked right on paper.

II

Modern literary criticism influenced by psychological method has attempted recently to examine the mental processes which lead to creative production. The outstanding success of the method has been J. L. Lowes's¹ sustained penetration into Coleridge's mind prior to the composition of *The Ancient Mariner*. The general aims of this criticism have been summarized recently by Professor Cazamian: 'The end and aim of that synthetic act [of criticism] is to seize from the inside the creative mood of the writer; the complex of emotions and ideas that lies at the core of the work, and from which it originated. This is not merely to divine a purpose, an artistic intent; it is to possess oneself of the very growth and expansion of the purpose into an accomplished reality. Here we have history indeed, but the inner history of a mind, which has obeyed the prompting of self-expression.'² Such a method, however fruitful its yield, has usually been difficult to follow. The precise *idée génératrice* cannot be identified, while the original impulse may be modified or transmuted by a complexity of experience in the period intervening between the first conception and the final accomplishment. With Keats's sonnet all the conditions necessary for this analysis of the creative process are present. The original stimulus is a book which can still be seen and handled in the same shape and format as it was seen and handled by Keats himself. The period between the creative stimulus and the composition is limited, even at a generous estimate, to some five hours. The associative and temporal conditions of the poetic production are thus clearly defined. The problem gains additional interest in that here, for the first time, Keats found himself as a poet. Leigh Hunt, looking at a number of Keats's early

¹ *The Road to Xanadu*.

² *Criticism in the Making*, 1829, p. 30.

verses, saw that the Chapman sonnet possessed qualities of imagination and phrasing far surpassing those of any of his other early works. 'One of them', writes Leigh Hunt in reference to a number of Keats's poems, 'was that noble sonnet on first reading Chapman's Homer which terminates with so energetic a calmness and which completely announced the new poet taking possession.'¹ Can the ways of Keats's imagination be followed as he took possession on that walk from Clerkenwell to the Poultry after his first excited plunge into the 'beautiful folio edition of Chapman'?

III

Naturally one's primary source for the conditions of this poetic creation would be any statement that Keats himself made with reference to the poem. His prose work, his letters and journals, are devoid of all mention of the sonnet and we have Cowden Clarke's word that there was no accompanying letter with the draft presented to him in October, 1816. Yet unless I am mistaken an undetected recollection of the circumstances which led to its creation lies in *Sleep and Poetry*. This work, however unsatisfactory as a poem, is a valuable poetic diary of Keats's mind in the months immediately following his visit to Cowden Clarke. In the autumn of 1816 Keats visited Leigh Hunt in Hampstead and he describes himself as writing the poem on a sofa in Leigh Hunt's study:

The pleasant day, upon a couch at ease.
It was a poet's house, who keeps the keys
Of pleasure's temple. Round about were hung
The glorious features of the bards who sung
In other ages—cold and sacred busts
Smiled at each other.

It is possible that this was written in the same month as the Chapman sonnet. Within this poem Keats considers the reading and study necessary for his art, and yet he speaks confidently of his ambition:

I've seen
The end and aim of Poesy. 'Tis clear
As anything most true.

¹ Leigh Hunt, *Lord Byron and his Contemporaries*, 1828, vol. ii, p. 410.

In a mood of undisciplined exaltation he describes how he will pursue that aim, and then suddenly some recollection checks and sobers him :

Stay ! an inward frown
Of conscience bids me be more calm awhile.
*An ocean dim, sprinkled with many an isle,
Spreads awfully before me. How much toil !
How many days ! what desperate turmoil !
Ere I can have explored its widenesses.
Ah ! what a task ! upon my bended knees,
I could unsay those—no, impossible !
Impossible !*

For sweet relief I'll dwell
On humbler thoughts, and let this strange assay
Begun in gentleness die so away.
E'en now all tumult from my bosom fades :
I turn full-hearted to the friendly aids
That smooth the path of honour ; brotherhood,
*And friendliness the nurse of mutual good.
The hearty grasp that sends a pleasant sonnet
Into the brain ere one can think upon it ;
The silence when some rhymes are coming out ;
And when they're come, the very pleasant rout :
The message certain to be done to-morrow.
'Tis perhaps as well that it should be to borrow
Some precious book from out its snug retreat,
To cluster round it when we next shall meet.
Scarce can I scribble on ; for lovely airs
Are fluttering round the room like doves in pairs ;
Many delights of that glad day recalling,
When first my senses caught their tender falling.*

Everything within this passage had been in his mind on that evening a few weeks before when the Chapman poem had been composed: the thought of an ocean—the many isles—friendship—the sonnet certain to be finished by the morning—the precious book—a borrowed book—and the recognition of a new experience. Even the anxiety for the rhymes, seen in the scrawls in the margin of the first draft, is recollected. There has disappeared only the passionate energy which gave a poetic identity and strength to the sonnet itself.

This passage from *Sleep and Poetry* confirms Leigh Hunt's opinion that in the Chapman sonnet a new poet was taking possession. It suggests further that Keats himself knew that within this sonnet he had grappled more successfully than ever before with the shapes of his imagination. Yet however interesting in itself, Keats's account of the reception of creative experience does not aid much in the exploration of his mind during the hours of composition. If we can trust his poetical recollection the sonnet came quickly, 'into the brain ere one can think upon it': the imagination did not haggle with the poet on that dawn walk from Clerkenwell, and he pays a tribute to her graceful yielding. We have to turn elsewhere to find what passed through his mind in those hours.

IV

When Keats said 'Good night' to Cowden Clarke his mind was filled, as far as any mind can be, with one thought alone, Homer revealed by Chapman. But before the sonnet was completed this central thought had become associated and suffused with images drawn from far corners of the earth, and from the sky and its celestial bodies. Homer had become ruler of a wide demesne; the discovery of books was like the discovery of kingdoms; the revelation of Chapman was like that of a new planet to an astronomer or of the Pacific to Cortez.¹ How within the course of a few hours had Cortez on a peak in Darien, and astronomers, and voyages of discovery, and Apollo all clustered around the initial passionate impulse?

In exploring this experience one turns naturally to Keats's other poems of this period to discover if any of the images present in the Chapman sonnet have intruded elsewhere into his imaginative work. Cortez and Darien, and the Pacific, and the suggestion of ocean-voyaging have no parallel elsewhere, but with Apollo and the reference to astronomy the results are not wholly disappointing.

Keats's first impulse is to think of Homer as a 'bard in

¹ The confusion of Cortez and Balboa is discussed later.

fealty to Apollo'. Here he is merely describing his new thought in terms of imagery that has been present in his mind for many months. Apollo next to Cynthia was his favourite deity: he had introduced him into the epistle to *My Brother George*. He liked to think of Apollo as the monarch of poets, particularly contemporary poets, of the great spirits who 'now on earth are sojourning', Wordsworth and Leigh Hunt above all, and he himself as a poet on probation. In *I stood tip-toe*, a poem written a few months later, he shows how the image of Apollo rested in his mind:

Ye ardent marigolds!
 Dry up the moisture from your golden lids,
For great Apollo bids
That in these days your praises should be sung
On many harps, which he has lately strung.

Apollo, too, is the presiding deity of romanticism and of the poets of whom Keats himself approves. He is a god whose critical persuasion leads him to a personal antipathy to the school of Pope, and so in the famous passage in *Sleep and Poetry* in which Keats condemns the school of the couplet:

Yes, a schism,
 Nurtured by foppery and barbarism
 Made great Apollo blush for this his land.
 Men were thought wise who could not understand
 His glories.

Such references are frequent in the volume of 1817, so frequent that we feel that the most natural way in which Keats at this period could speak of poets was as the chieftains of Apollo. So he had thought of his contemporaries, and now he saw a greater bard, ruler of a domain wider than the isles of verse which he had previously known. Apollo then entered into the sonnet because he was already present as a persistent element in the imaginative background of Keats's mind. Keats, in making a journey to a new imaginative world, begins with a world that is familiar. Apollo can thus simply be tracked to earth; but what of 'the watcher of the skies'?

V

The poems of the same year as the Chapman sonnet suggest that Keats possessed some unusual interest in the stars, and in other heavenly bodies, and in those who observe them. Frequently, it is true, that interest is mythological, but at times it formulates itself in direct description. A few months before, in a sonnet on *Solitude*,¹ he had used the phrase 'Nature's observatory', while in a number of other poems of this period references to heavenly bodies are frequent and precise.² It would appear, then, that the image:

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken,

is the culminating expression of some association which has been in his mind for a considerable period. The problem now resolves itself into the discovery of the reason why Keats should have shown any interest in the stars or in astronomy. Here the extant information is helpful, for it is now known³ that, in 1811, as a pupil in the school of Charles Cowden Clarke's father at Enfield, Master John Keats was 'assigned as a Reward of Merit' a copy of John Bonnycastle's *Introduction to Astronomy in a series of Lectures from a Preceptor to his Pupil*.⁴ Keats had possessed this volume for five years when he wrote the Chapman sonnet, but that in itself is no proof that he had read it. Many school prizes pass unread. Can it be demonstrated that Keats ever opened the volume before he gave it away to George Keats in 1818? Even if this can be shown it remains to discover what mental association there existed in Keats's mind between Bonnycastle's commonplace discourses and the emotional excitement aroused by the encounter with Chapman's Homer. An examination of Bonnycastle's work reveals that whether

¹ *Examiner*, 5 May 1816.

² *To Hope; Keen, fitful gusts, &c.*

³ *Bulletin and Review of the Keats-Shelley Memorial*, Rome, 1913, p. 20.

⁴ In 1913 the volume Keats possessed was in the possession of Mrs. John H. Morgan, Kentucky.

Keats read it all or not, some parts of it he certainly read, and those elements remained deeply within his mind and arose from time to time to associate themselves with his creative work. Bonnycastle possessed, too, a close personal association in Keats's mind with Homer. But first let us attempt to estimate what influence this writer whom Amy Lowell dismissed contemptuously as 'Old Bonnycastle' had on Keats's developing imagination.

VI

John Bonnycastle was not by profession an astronomer, but a man of wide reading and a successful writer of textbooks. His volumes on algebra and mathematics had been popular, and his *Astronomy* was already in its fifth edition¹ when Keats was presented with a copy. If Bonnycastle was not a profound scholar his wide knowledge and his genial manners had made him the friend of a number of men of letters. The most vivid portrait of him is to be found in Leigh Hunt's *Memoirs*: 'Bonnycastle was a good fellow. He was a tall, gaunt, long-headed man, with large features and spectacles, and a deep internal voice with a twang of rusticity in it, and he goggled over his plate like a horse. I have often thought that a bag of corn would have hung well on him. His laugh was equine and showed his teeth upwards at the sides. Mr. Bonnycastle was passionately fond of quoting Shakespeare and telling stories. It was delightful one day to hear him speak with complacency of a translation which had appeared of one of his books in Arabic and which began by saying on the part of the translator that "it had pleased God, for the advancement of human knowledge, to raise up a Bonnycastle".'² It is doubtful whether this genial, complacent, loquacious pedant ever did much to advance human knowledge, but he was the friend of artists and he liked poetry, and through these two tastes 'it had pleased

¹ Keats was presented with the edition of 1807.

² Leigh Hunt, *Lord Byron and His Contemporaries*, 1828, vol. ii, p. 32.

God' to raise him up to assist in the poetic development of John Keats.

'He was passionately fond of quoting': such is Leigh Hunt's observation, and the habit did not desert him when he came to write of astronomy. He feared that astronomy might prove a little heavy for the average reader, so he decided to diversify his discourses with quotations from the poets. This method he explains in his introduction:

The frequent allusions to the Poets, and the various quotations interspersed throughout the work, were intended as an agreeable relief to minds unaccustomed to the regular deduction of facts by mathematical reasoning, and to enliven those parts where a simple detail of particulars must, from its necessary length, become languid. Poetical descriptions, though they may not be strictly conformable to the rigid principles of the science they are meant to elucidate, generally leave a stronger impression on the mind, and are far more captivating than simple unadorned language. From a persuasion of this kind, the author has sometimes expatiated on subjects with a warmth of expression which may perhaps seem too florid for a philosophical performance; but which alone could delineate those elevated ideas that must necessarily arise in the display of the sublimest scenes in nature, and the most stupendous works of creation.

Keats, at the age of sixteen, was presented not merely with a volume on astronomy, but with a collection of passages from the very writers who were later to exercise a profound influence on his creative work: Dryden is here, and Ovid, Thomson, and, above all, Milton.¹ The volume came into his hands in the very months when his poetic interests were first awakened, for we have the evidence of Edward Holmes, Keats's old school friend, that up to his sixteenth year 'Keats was not literary . . . his love of books and poetry manifested itself chiefly about a year before he left school'.² Here was a volume which during his quickening adolescent period he possessed for himself, a volume which, however remote its

¹ Keats derived some of his interest in heavenly bodies from Milton. It is possible that in Bonnycastle he made one of his earliest contacts with Milton.

² Houghton MSS., quoted by Colvin, *Keats*, p. 12.

professed subject, contained passages of poetry describing the stars, the sun, and the moon, and the endeavour of man to follow their movements.

But was the subject remote? Keats could read in Bonnycastle that astronomy was a necessary subsidiary to poetry. In the first discourse Bonnycastle had written: 'The Poets, in particular, have been lavish in their praises upon this subject, *and are indebted to it for some of their boldest images and most exalted descriptions.* Virgil, the greatest master of verse after Homer speaks of it with enthusiasm. . . . To contemplate the grand spectacle of the heavens, has ever been considered the noblest privilege of our nature.' So Keats himself in his epistle to *My Brother George*:

I've thought
No sphere'y strains by me could e'er be caught
From the blue dome, though I to dimness gaze
On the far depths where sheeted lightning plays,
Or, on the wavy grass outstretch'd supinely
Pry 'mong the stars, to strive to think divinely.

Closely allied to this conception is Keats's fantasy, apparent in his poetry from *Sleep and Poetry* onwards, that in the heavens were mirrored with unearthly grandeur all the forms of the imagination and the shapes of romance. In *Sleep and Poetry* imagination appeared to him as a mighty charioteer guiding his horses amid the clouds. He returned two years later to this same conception of the union of imagination with the heavens in his sonnet *When I have fears that I may cease to be*:

When I behold, upon the *night's starr'd face*,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance.

That the conception was a persistent one can be seen from his letter to Reynolds in February, 1818: 'Man should be content with as few points to tip with the fine Web of his Soul, and *weave a tapestry empyrean full of symbols* for his spiritual eye.'¹

¹ *Keats's Works*, H. Buxton Forman, vol. iii, p. 118.

Apart from this fantasy there can be found in Keats's poetry an unusual interest in the skies and in the heavenly bodies. Part of this interest lies in mythology, in the identity of the moon with Cynthia and of the sun with Apollo. Equally impressive is the associative recollection of direct observation of the heavens or of accurate knowledge of heavenly bodies. It appears from Keats's poetry that the heavenly bodies were a permanent element in the background of his imagination. His use is more varied and more detailed than that of other poets. Frequently he describes human people in the image of heavenly bodies. Thus, in *Lamia*, we find that Lycius addresses Lamia:

*My silver planet, both of eve and morn,*¹

and in *The Eve of St. Agnes* he describes Porphyro:

. . . he arose
Ethereal, flush'd and like *a throbbing star*
*Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose.*²

Not only people, but the shapes of earth itself, reminded him of the heavens, and so he came to conceive that keen image in *Lamia*:

Where hung a silver lamp, whose phosphor glow
Reflected in the slabbed steps below,
*Mild as a star in water.*³

This general interest in the firmament crystallizes in a number of places into images which suggest more definitely a knowledge and reading of astronomy. Sun-spots and meteors, falling stars, the Milky Way, and the tides moon-governed, and the discovery of new planets, are among the astronomical conceptions found within his poetical work. These references occur mainly in the early poems, in the years when he used such an image as 'nature's observatory'. In the Epistle to George Keats (written two months before the Chapman Sonnet) he writes:

The Poet's eye can reach those golden halls,
And view the glory of their festivals:

¹ *Lamia*, ii. 48.

² *The Eve of St. Agnes*, i. 36.

³ *Lamia*, i. 380.

Their ladies fair that in the distance seem
 Fit for the silv'ring of a seraph's dream ;
 Their rich brimm'd goblets, that incessant run
Like the bright spots that move about the sun ;
 And, when upheld, the wine from each bright jar
 Pours *with the lustre of a falling star*.¹

The passage is one in which Keats, as in *Sleep and Poetry*,¹ has fashioned the shapes of his imagination upon the skies, but the detailed images of the bright spots and the falling stars seem incongruous conceits, dragged in from some other recollection. The phrase 'the lustre of a falling star'² is undoubtedly a memory from Milton's description of the fall of Mulciber in *Paradise Lost*, Book I,

from morn
 To noon he fell, from Noon to dewy Eve,
 A summer's day ; and with the setting sun
 Dropt from the zenith like a falling star
 On Lemnos th' Ægean isle.

His dependence here on Bonnycastle can be seen with unusual clarity in the phrase 'bright spots'.³ To the lay mind the sun-spot is a dark spot, but Bonnycastle explains in his Letter XXI how the 'dark spot' becomes a bright spot:

The sun was generally considered by the ancients as a globe of pure fire ; but, from a number of dark spots, which, by means of a telescope, may be seen on different parts of his surface, it appears that this opinion was ill founded. These spots consist, in general, of a nucleus, or central part, which appears much darker than the rest, and seems to be surrounded by a kind of mist or smoke ; and they are so changeable in their situation

¹ *Epistle to George Keats*, ll. 35-42 f.

² Keats's meaning is less clear than Milton's. If by 'falling star' he means 'meteor' or 'comet' he may have had in mind Bonnycastle's Letters XX, XXI.

³ The whole passage in Keats's poem is obscure. It has been suggested to me that 'bright spots' mean 'bright stars'. But though this would simplify the line itself it would fail to make an intelligible image of the whole passage. I believe that Keats was thinking of wine here, as in the *Nightingale* Ode, with bright bubbles on it: 'with beaded bubbles winking at the brim'.

and figure, as frequently to vary during the time of observation. Some of the largest of them, which are found to exceed the bulk of the whole earth, are often to be seen for three months together: and when they disappear, they are generally converted into faculae, or luminous spots, which appear much brighter than the rest of the sun.

It is natural in *Endymion*, the poem of Cynthia the moon-goddess, that Keats should return to astronomical imagery. Among frequent references to heavenly bodies are two unusual passages in which 'meteor-stone' and 'meteor star'¹ are employed for images. In Bonnycastle's Discourse, Keats could have learnt how the ancients confused meteors and comets, and could have discovered references both to Homer and to Milton.

In Keats's maturer work, the memories become less frequent but more appropriate. In his early poetry the images for the stars are forced and harsh: in the later work they have strength and appropriateness. So, possibly, in the *Bright Star* sonnet he is led to the exquisite image of the moon:

And watching with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,

by a memory of Bonnycastle's Discourse *Of the Nature of the Tides*.

VII

From this brief survey it can be seen that Keats had an unusual interest in the heavens and that this interest depended in part on Bonnycastle. It remains to show that the image in the Chapman Sonnet arose from similar recollections. Bonnycastle's twenty-third and last Discourse is entitled *Of the New Planets and Other Discoveries*. This is the only chapter in Bonnycastle which resembles the adventure stories which delighted Keats during his school years. In this Discourse Keats may have been arrested by the description of Herschell's discovery of a new planet in 1781. The event was

¹ *Endymion*, i. 640, ii. 229.

recent; it had aroused much contemporary interest, and Bonnycastle's description is more arresting than usual:

But of all the discoveries in this science none will be thought more singular than that which has lately been made by Dr. Herschell, who, as he was pursuing a design which he had formed of observing, with telescopes of his own construction, every part of the heavens, discovered . . . a star, which, in magnitude and situation, differed considerably from any that he had before observed. . . . Those observations, compared with those of other eminent astronomers, sufficiently prove that this star is a Primary Planet.

From such an extract and from the memory of the poetical passages in Bonnycastle it seems an easy transition to the image:

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken.

Nor is it the text alone that suggested the associations appropriate to this image. Bonnycastle's *Astronomy* was illustrated by a series of plates. Most of these are plans and diagrams which probably presented little attraction to Keats. The frontispiece, however, is of a different category. It is an allegorical conception of astronomy portrayed by J. H. Fuseli, whose friendship with Bonnycastle was noted by Leigh Hunt as possessing a 'childlike and agreeable' quality. Seated in the left of the picture is a young, robed figure, which by some strange coincidence has a profile like that found in some of the Keats portraits.¹ By his side, with her arm round him and looking tenderly down into his eyes, is a young maiden. She is clad in a long dress open at the neck and leaving her arms bare. She is pointing with her disengaged hand to the heavens, and in her forehead amid her long flowing tresses is a bright star. Behind, an effect of cloud gives a sense of immensity, as if the two figures were pinnacled upon some high mountain. Fuseli, whose *Nightmare* picture was so popular, has imparted a wild ecstatic gaze to the young seated figure. As an allegorical presentation of astronomy the picture may be worth little, but it has

¹ This is pure coincidence: Fuseli prepared this frontispiece in 1786.

all the qualities that would have attracted Keats. It combines astronomy with romance and allegory: it imparts a sensuous quality to this study that required a 'regular deduction of facts by mathematical reasoning'. Here was a new planet swimming within the ken of a young, romantic figure and yielding not merely the calm intellectual enjoyment that Herschell may have felt, but the sensuous suggestion of love. It is not without significance that the only other allegorical illustration in Bonnycastle is a figure of Andromeda, naked to the waist and manacled at the wrists, and chained. As I attempt to show in Note A, I think that this picture influenced Keats in the references to Andromeda which occur in his poetry.

VIII

The evidence that Keats had some recollection of Bonnycastle in mind for the 'new planet' image seems sufficient, but this furnishes no explanation why Bonnycastle should have come into his mind that night, and associated himself with Chapman's Homer. Could there exist any associative link between the placid discourses of Bonnycastle and the *Odyssey*? We are driven back once more to Cowden Clarke's account of that evening when he and Keats first looked for 'famousest' passages in Chapman. Their method of exploring the book is described by Cowden Clarke in these words:

Well then, we were put in possession of the *Homer* of Chapman, and to work we went, turning to some of the 'famousest' passages, as we had scrappily known them in Pope's version. There was, for instance, that perfect scene of the conversation on Troy wall of the old Senators with Helen, who is pointing out to them the several Greek Captains; with the Senator Antenor's vivid portrait of an orator in Ulysses, beginning at the 237th line of the third book. . . . The shield and helmet of Diomed with the accompanying simile in the opening of the third book; and the prodigious description of Neptune's passage to the Achive ships, in the thirteenth book. . . . One scene I could not fail to introduce to him—the shipwreck of Ulysses in the fifth book of the *Odysseus*, and I had the reward of one of his delighted stares on reading the following lines:

Then forth he came, his both knees faltering, both
 His strong hands hanging down, and all with froth
 His cheeks and nostrils flowing, voice and breath
 Spent to all use, and down he sank to death.
 The sea had soaked his heart through : all his veins
 His toils had rack'd t' a labouring woman's pains.
 Dead weary was he.

On an after-occasion I showed him the couplet, in Pope's translation, upon the same passage :

From mouth and nose the briny current ran
 And lost in lassitude lay all the man.

Cowden Clarke, recalling the occasion after many years, is rather complacent as to the part he played. One thing, however, emerges : when the two friends came to read the extract from the fifth book on the shipwreck of Ulysses, Keats showed an unusual interest. We turn again to Bonnycastle and find that he, too, refers to the fifth book of Ulysses and that he quotes a passage in the same scene, only a few hundred lines from the passage to which Cowden Clarke drew Keats's attention. The passage in Bonnycastle reads :

The method of sailing by the stars, as it is frequently called, may be traced back as far as the time of Homer, and, perhaps, to a still earlier period ; but from the account which he has given us, of the departure of Ulysses from the island of Calypso, it has been inferred, his knowledge of astronomy must have been very imperfect, since he describes the constellation of the Great Bear as never setting, which is only the case in certain latitudes.

Plac'd at the helm he sate, and mark'd the skies,
 Nor clos'd in sleep his ever-watchful eyes.
 There view'd the Pleiads, and the Northern team,
 And great Orion's more refulgent beam,
 To which, around the axle of the sky,
 The Bear, revolving, points his golden eye ;
 Who shines exalted on th' ethereal plain,
 Nor bathes his blazing forehead in the main.¹

Odyssey, Book V.

¹ Bonnycastle, close of Letter IX. Bonnycastle does not mention that he is quoting from Pope's translation.

These lines describe the departure of Ulysses from Calypso, and the beginning of his renewed voyage which leads to the shipwreck, prepared for him by Neptune. It is the natural starting-place for the extract on the shipwreck which Keats and Cowden Clarke chose to read together. No wonder that Keats rewarded Cowden Clarke with one of his 'delighted stares'. He found that he had travelled this way before. He had discovered this passage in the very year when poetry had first become a passion with him. He was now going down that same road again, but Chapman and not Pope was the guide.

IX

The content of part of Keats's mind as he walked home to the Poultry now lies apparent before us, not only the images themselves but the associative links in his experience which makes it possible for him to hold them in unity within his mind. Homer and Chapman have a natural link with Bonnycastle, and Bonnycastle with Fuseli's picture, and with poetical imagery on astronomy, and with the account of Herschell's new planet. But we are still left with the problem of how Homer and Chapman and Bonnycastle were ever associated with Cortez and a peak in Darien.

If the argument so far presented be allowed, it becomes apparent that during these crucial hours of poetic conception Keats had been driven back in every way to memories of his old school in Enfield. Cowden Clarke was his school friend and his first teacher in poetry. Cowden Clarke's father was his head master. Bonnycastle's *Astronomy* was a school prize. He had now seen a book which for years he had wanted to read. The unity in experience which held the elements of this association together was in the past in Enfield. What is more natural than that there should arise in his mind another memory of those same school years, or that the memory of a night so splendidly employed in the discovery of a new book should lead him back to an old book discovered in his Enfield days. Fortunately Cowden Clarke, in his *Recol-*

lections, is able to give some indication of the volumes that attracted Keats in his school days. Cowden Clarke writes:

He must in those last months have exhausted the school library, which consisted principally of abridgements of all the voyages and travels of any note; Mavor's Collection; also his Universal History; Robertson's histories of Scotland, America and Charles the fifth; all Miss Edgeworth's productions, together with many other works.

Robertson's *America*¹ supplies the very clue required. Keats's mind is already alert to ideas of travel and of sea-voyages and discovery: the imagery of the Apollo passage and the fifth book of the *Odyssey* have given him this, and his recollections have dwelt with his school days when travel-books, as we know, were his favourite reading. Suddenly there emerges the memory of a book of travel and exploration, a book that had mentioned the science of navigation in Homer's time,² and where he has read of a discovery not less remarkable than that recounted by Bonnycastle, and not less revealing than the intellectual excitement which he and Cowden Clarke had just enjoyed. In the very period when he had first possessed Bonnycastle he had read in Robertson:

The isthmus of Darien is not above sixty miles in breadth, but this neck of land, which binds together the continents of North and South America, is stretched by a chain of lofty mountains stretching through its whole extent, which render it a barrier of solidity sufficient to resist the impulse of two opposite oceans. . . .

At length the Indians assured them, that from the top of the next mountain they should discover the ocean which was the object of their wishes. When, with infinite toil, they had climbed up the greater part of that steep ascent, Balboa commanded his men to halt, and advanced alone to the summit, that he might be the first who should enjoy a spectacle which he had so long desired. As soon as he beheld the South Sea stretching in endless prospect below him, he fell on his knees, and lifting

¹ The fact that a passage is a recollection from Robertson has long been known. What I try to show is why Robertson came into Keats's mind on this particular night.

² *The History of America*, William Robertson, 1777, vol. i, p. 12.

up his hands to Heaven, returned thanks to God, who had conducted him to a discovery so beneficial to his country, and so honourable to himself. His followers, observing his transports of joy, rushed forward to join in his wonder, exultation and gratitude. They held on their course to the shore with great alacrity, when Balboa, advancing up to the middle in the waves with his buckler and sword, took possession of that ocean in the name of the king his master, and vowed to defend it, with these arms, against all his enemies.¹

So beneath the organizing idea of discovery and the personal unity of childhood recollection, Darien and the Pacific, and new planets, and Homer, and Chapman have all been brought to the service of one creative expression.

X

One difficulty in his recollection from Robertson was pointed out long ago by Tennyson to Palgrave.² Keats has made 'stout' Cortez the discoverer of the Pacific, but as Tennyson noted, 'History would here suggest Balboa'. The easiest, but I think least effective, explanation of this difficulty is that Keats changed the names consciously for the sake of euphemy. Balboa is not a comfortable name for the line of a sonnet. Keats was writing away from books, and it is equally probable that he remembered Cortez but forgot Balboa. If this is so, then it is still to be discovered why one name should disappear from his mind and the other remain. A suggestion is supplied here by Leigh Hunt, who was apparently unaware of any historical inaccuracy. In his *Recollections* he writes that Keats had seen the striking picture of Cortez by Titian. 'Cortez's eagle-eyes', writes Leigh Hunt, 'are a piece of historical painting as the reader may see by Titian's portrait of him.' For Keats a picture was throughout his life a powerful source of suggestion, and if anything could obscure Balboa and impress Cortez on his mind it would be such a painting as Leigh Hunt asserts that Keats had seen. One

¹ Robertson, vol. i, p. 201 and pp. 203-4.

² Palgrave, *Golden Treasury*, Notes, Book IV.

further suggestion I advance tentatively. The passage in Homer's *Odyssey* which had such peculiar significance for Keats was an account of a shipwreck. In Robertson, immediately preceding the description of the discovery of the Pacific, there is a graphic account of the Spanish expedition of 1510, of a shipwreck, and of dangers at sea. Cortez's name is attached to this description. The passage in Robertson reads :

The loss of their ships by various accidents upon an unknown coast, the diseases peculiar to a climate the most noxious in all America, the want of provisions, unavoidable in a country imperfectly cultivated, dissensions among themselves, and the incessant hostilities of the natives, involved them in a succession of calamities, the bare recital of which strikes one with horror. . . . Ferdinand Cortez, whose name became still more famous, had engaged early in this enterprise, which roused all the active youth of Hispaniola to arms ; but the good fortune, which accompanied him in his subsequent adventures, interposed to save him from the disasters to which his companions were exposed. He was taken ill at St. Domingo before the departure of the fleet, and detained there by that indisposition.

Keats's recollection may have been biased towards this passage by the presence in his mind of the Ulysses shipwreck, and then he may have telescoped it with the description of the discovery of the Pacific by Balboa, and as Balboa struggled to regain his just place in Keats's consciousness, Titian's picture of the eagle-eyed Cortez led him effectively back into dim obscurity.

XI

So we can now see, however dimly, some of the mental content and processes of Keats after he left Cowden Clarke on the day-spring of a morning in the autumn of 1816. The handsome folio of Chapman—the precious book borrowed from out its snug retreat—the friend, 'the nurse of mutual good'—the fifth book of the *Odyssey*—the shipwreck of Ulysses—the delighted stare—the memory of Bonnycastle and his poets—the new planet—Fuseli's picture—the old red-brick house at Enfield originally built for a West

India merchant—the school library—Robertson's *America*—voyages again—Darien—the Pacific—the Titian picture—Homer again and Chapman—Apollo the patron of all true poets—and so the far-reaching resources of stored suggestion concentrate into a single imaginative experience and send a pleasant sonnet into the brain ere one can think upon it.

So far we are led by the psychological method, and at first sight it might seem that we had pierced beyond externals towards the shaping of the imaginative mind. But when sober stock has been taken of the position, this is found to be far from the truth. We have merely gained the data which allow us to register some of the associative links in Keats's mind. We have found his mind working very much as any mind might work, discovering a personal and emotional sequence arising from past experience in objects that are rationally dissociated. But the crucial problem of how the imagination came to organize these diverse strands into a single expression remains unsolved. The distance which separates the possession of an experience which appears suitable for poetic creation and the actual production of the finished poem, is immeasurable. Keats in *Sleep and Poetry* recalled to mind the same associations as he possessed on the night of the Chapman Sonnet, but he converted them there, not into a single poetic reality, but into rambling discursive lines.

With apparently so much material in our hands we are left frustrated, outside the compelling purpose of Keats's mind. It remains to see how far we can reconstruct the shaping quality of his imagination as it worked on the material which we have surveyed. Here we are driven back to further consideration of the initial experience from which the poem arose. This Keats has stated in the title to be 'On first looking into Chapman's Homer'. Can the reader of the Sonnet ever regain contact with the quality of Keats's first emotional excitement?

Certain conditions can be defined. Keats's passionate enthusiasm on seeing Chapman was due largely to an uncritical prejudice against Pope. It was existent in his mind

before he had seen Chapman. Pope's translations of Homer he had refused to study: he had known them 'scrappily', as Cowden Clarke tells us, and that was all. His anger against Pope was increased by the evening spent with Chapman's Homer, for, as we have seen, it was immediately afterwards in *Sleep and Poetry*, with the memory of Chapman in his mind, that he wrote his diatribe against the pseudo-classical school:

Could all this be forgotten? Yes, a schism
 Nurtured by foppery and barbarism
 Made great Apollo blush for this his land.
 Men were thought wise who could not understand
 His glories: with a puling infant's force
 They sway'd about upon a rocking horse,
 And thought it Pegasus. Ah, dismal soul'd!
 The winds of heaven blew, the ocean roll'd
 Its gathering waves—ye felt it not. The blue
 Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew
 Of summer nights collected still to make
 The morning precious: beauty was awake!
 Why were ye not awake? But ye were dead
 To things ye knew not of,—were closely wed
 To musty laws lined out with wretched rule
 And compass vile: so that ye taught a school
 Of dolts to smooth, inlay, and clip, and fit,
 Till, like the certain wands of Jacob's wit,
 Their verses tallied.

Cowden Clarke, in the *Reminiscences*, has shown that part of the enjoyment of discovering Chapman was the opportunity of pillorying Pope. If further encouragement was necessary for this game the Leigh Hunt circle could supply it. The creative mood thus arises strangely enough from one of critical bias and personal detestation. Yet had not this irrational antipathy existed, his imagination would in all probability not have been stirred. The extent of his antagonism to Pope can be seen in a letter of May 1817, written some eight months after the Chapman sonnet. Keats was in a mood of depression over his own work, and he found consolation in the fact that his own verses were far superior to

Pope's couplets in the Homer translation. 'I am one', he writes, 'that "gather Samphire, dreadful trade"—the Cliff of Poetry towers above me—yet when Tom who meets with some of Pope's Homer in Plutarch's *Lives* reads some of those to me they seem like Mice to mine.' Keats, who was of modesty compact, never assumed to any other creative writer the tone of arrogance which he here employs towards Pope.

To understand Keats's mood in October 1816, we are forced to recapture an enthusiasm which is critically exaggerated and an antagonism which is critically false. Such a mood can never be regained. One would have to forget all that one had thought of Chapman, and to lay aside with one's own memories all the sober judgements of criticism. Once again, although in possession of the data of the poet's experience and with the knowledge of his governing emotion, we still are not allowed to see how the single poetic reality of the sonnet arose from this diverse material.

XII

One stage further we can follow Keats, although here we see him not as a creator but as the critic of his own work. The version of the Chapman Sonnet in the 1817 volume differs in two important ways from the draft which Cowden Clarke read in the autumn of 1816. In the intervening period the mind, relieved of the supremely absorbing task of creation, was free to adjust words and improve phrases. In the later version Cortez's 'wond'ring eyes' become 'Cortez when with eagle eyes', and the one lame line in the early draft:

Yet could I never judge what men could mean
is transformed into:

Yet did I never breathe its pure serene.

It needed the detachment of a critical revising spirit to attain that second rendering. The method by which it is attained is somewhat analogous to that which we have seen working in the creation of the sonnet itself. Keats, dwelling now on the detail of the sonnet, and the strength of its workmanship,

allows his mind to wander over the memory of poets he has read and the cohorts of powerful words which he has captured from their verses. Mr. Paget Toynbee¹ has pointed out that it was probably with a recollection of Cary's translation of the *Paradiso* that Keats's mind rested. Cary had rendered the lines:

Lumé non è, se non vier del sereno
Che non si turba mai

as:

Light is none.

Save that which cometh from the pure serene

Of ne'er disturbed ether.

Yet even here the thought of the empyrean has led this recollection into mental unity with the experience from which the poem arose.

XIII

I have examined a miniature poetic composition, the conditions of whose creation are closely defined. There emerges the supreme difficulty of ever re-fashioning the content of the original creative mood in a writer, and the impossibility of seeing how the experience within that mood was organized into creative work. The argument which I have outlined, though it possesses a certain logical continuity, may have only a dim relationship to the actual method of Keats's mind. It is conceivable that the genetic idea from which the sonnet arose was captured not after Keats's visit to Clarke but before he arrived there. The excitement, not of actually seeing the volume, but of knowing that he was going to see it, could quite as easily have started the passionate experience which came finally to rest in the sonnet. If so, the whole argument which I have detailed would have to be remodelled.

Every caution must be applied in employing the psychological method, but on the other hand it is the only method that can be employed in attempting to explore behind the

¹ *Times Literary Supplement*, 16 June 1921.

finished composition towards the poet's mind. We speak glibly at times of sources as if they were an Open Sesame towards the elucidation of the methods of poetic construction. But a source must be transformed into a psychological fact before it can affect composition, and as such it can exist only in one mind and in that mind only at one moment. If Keats had lost the full content of the impulse behind the discovery of Chapman a month or two later when he wrote *Sleep and Poetry* it is not likely that we can now recapture it. It is valuable to explore as closely as possible the road down which an imaginative writer has gone. The sequence, Cowden Clarke, Chapman, Homer, Bonnycastle, Herschell, Robertson, Cortez, Cary, Apollo, does help us indirectly to appreciate the sonnet, but I doubt if we can ever come as closely to the 'inside of the creative mood' as Professor Cazamian suggested in the passage already quoted. The danger is that in pursuing the psychological method we shall forget that it has a subsidiary function to fulfil, and losing ourselves in the intellectual enjoyment of its pursuit we shall become divorced from the poem itself. With the ever-increasing resources of criticism we are apt at times to forget that all criticism should serve to enable us to appreciate in its fullness an original creative work. It may also, if we are writers ourselves, help us in the methods by which experience can be disciplined into artistic form. Yet it remains that the one reality which we share with Keats is a group of words on the printed page. No examination of sources will ever tell us how they came there, or even what they meant for Keats himself, but a full and cautious use of the available material may enrich and quicken our minds as we come to read them.

NOTE A

In Bonnycastle there is a symbolic picture of the Andromeda constellation. Andromeda is represented as a woman, naked to the waist, manacled at the wrists, and chained. Keats twice refers to Andromeda:

1. In *Endymion* (4. 602) he writes :

Andromeda ! sweet woman ! why delaying
 So timidly amid the stars : come hither !
 Join this bright throng, and nimbly follow whither
 They all are going.
 Danae's Son, before Jove newly bow'd
 Has wept for thee, calling to Jove aloud.
 Thee, gentle lady, did he disenthral :
 Ye shall for ever live and love, for all
 Thy tears are flowing.

2. In the Sonnet, *If by dull rhymes*, he writes :

If by dull rhymes our English must be chain'd,
 And like Andromeda, the Sonnet sweet
 Fetter'd, in spite of pained loveliness.

Keats's main information for Andromeda would be Lemprière's *Classical Dictionary*. Here he would learn :

1. That Andromeda aroused the anger of Neptune and that 'nothing could stop the resentment of Neptune, if Andromeda was not exposed to the sea monster. She was accordingly tied naked to the rock' and rescued by Perseus (Danae's son).

2. 'Some say that Minerva made Andromeda a constellation in heaven after her death.'

Keats, in *Endymion*, seems to combine the captivity of Andromeda and her presence amid the stars. In Bonnycastle she is fettered and she is amid the stars. In the sonnets Keats speaks of her as 'chain'd' and 'fetter'd': the two words seem to suggest a memory of Bonnycastle, where the chains are the most conspicuous element in the picture. Lemprière merely uses the word 'tied'.

It would seem that the memories of Lemprière have coalesced with the memories of Bonnycastle.

B. IFOR EVANS.

ENGLISH POETS AND THE ABSTRACT WORD

No nation has treated in poetry moral ideas with more energy and depth than the English nation.—VOLTAIRE.

Fear is poetry, hope is poetry, love is poetry, hatred is poetry; contempt, jealousy, remorse, admiration, wonder, pity, despair, or madness, are all poetry.—HAZLITT.

THE most truly English figures in our poetry are Samuel Johnson and William Wordsworth. Insular, sturdy, prejudiced, middle-class, sublime. A happy fusion of the two might well represent *le type anglais*, the τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι of our island. They have their differences. The one was neo-classic, clubbable, superstitious, a Londoner, a moralist; and the other a mystic, a Lake poet, a romantic, a solitary. Johnson never clapped eyes on the lesser celandine; Wordsworth might have preferred the conversation of Simon Lee to that of Gibbon and Burke, even though one called Boswell, the other Coleridge, friend. 'Know thyself' was the maxim of Wordsworth, who composed an autobiographical poem of some length on the development of his own mind. The Doctor found that the proper study of mankind is man and was the biographer of Richard Savage.

Now these two men, artists both in poetry and prose, and critics of the art, illustrate two aspects of literature. Open the *Rambler* almost at random, and you will light upon such a sentence as :

He who has often brooded over his wrongs, pleased himself with schemes of malignity, and glutted his pride with the fancied supplications of humbled enmity, will not easily open his bosom to amity and reconciliation, or indulge the gentle sentiments of benevolence and peace. (No. 185.)

A truth expressed as only Johnson could express it. No less characteristic of Wordsworth are the lines

Behold, within the leafy shade,
Those bright blue eggs together laid !

On me the chance-discovered sight
 Gleamed like a vision of delight!

(*The Sparrow's Nest.*)

The first passage is general, the second is particular. And literature oscillates between these two poles; between, one may say, philosophy and experience, the moral idea and the material object. But where does the poet stand in relation to the sage on the one hand, and the man in the street on the other?

As regards the *purpose* of poetry Johnson and Wordsworth are essentially in agreement. 'The poet (Imlac told the Prince of Abyssinia), must consider right and wrong in their abstracted and invariable state; he must disregard present laws and opinions and rise to general and transcendental truths, which will always be the same. . . . He must write as the interpreter of nature and the legislator of mankind.' Wordsworth makes as philosophic a claim: 'Aristotle, I have been told, has said that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: it is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general and operative. . . . Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science.' Matthew Arnold exalts Wordsworth because his best work 'expresses moral ideas', because of his 'noble and profound application of ideas to life'. Might we not say the very same of Johnson's contributions to the *Idler* and the *Rambler*, and of many pages in the *Lives of the Poets*? But although Johnson and Wordsworth are at one in their moral and philosophical conception of poetry, they differ fundamentally as to poetic method. Johnson forbade the poet to number the streaks of the tulip, condemned Shakespeare's use of the words *dun* and *knife*, and shook his sides over the image of the heavens peeping through a blanket of the dark. Imagination boggles at what Pomposo's comment would be on Simon Lee's swollen ankles, the most revolutionary gesture in our literature, since Donne's Flea, and down to Eliot's:

I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Wordsworth's retort, however, would be damaging. He

would quote Johnson's versifying of a passage in the *Book of the Proverbs*:

How long shall sloth usurp thy useless hours,
Unnerve thy vigour, and enchain thy powers,
While artful shades thy downy couch enclose,
And soft sollicitation courts repose?
Amidst the drowsy charms of dull delight,
Year chases year with unremitted flight,
Till Want, now following, fraudulent and slow,
Shall spring to seize thee, like an ambushed foe.

'From this hubbub of words', says Wordsworth, 'pass to the original': How long wilt thou sleep, O Sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of thy hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

I must not linger upon what is fairly familiar ground, although I shall return to these passages and to all that a contrast between them implies. It is worth noting that Johnson and Wordsworth only differed in that the one reversed the mental process of the other. Johnson had a happy knack of analogy and made frequent use of it in conversation. He would enunciate a general principle or make a dubious but dogmatic statement, and then follow it up with an analogy from everyday life. Wordsworth has an actual experience, for instance the meeting with the Leech-gatherer, and passes from it to the universal:

And the whole body of the Man did seem
Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

And, in a sense, the career of Richard Savage bears the same relation to Johnson's moral reflections in the *Rambler*, as 'the bright blue eggs' bear to Wordsworth's 'vision of delight'. But even if we can stomach 'the fancied suplications of humbled enmity, &c.' in prose, we have no appetite for such language in verse. What terms then is the poet to employ in his expression of transcendental truths, in his noble and profound application of ideas to life?

The question I wish to raise is, to what extent or in what ways does the poet employ abstract words. For purposes of the inquiry, words must be divided into two classes; those which express moral ideas, qualities, or states of mind, and those which describe material objects and sensory experiences; the first or Johnsonian class I call abstract, the second or Wordsworthian class concrete. The dichotomy is between 'the fancied supplications of humbled enmity' on the one hand, and 'those bright blue eggs together laid' on the other. I intend to examine how words of the first class are best employed in poetry and I have suggested that such an examination is important because critics and poets from Aristotle to Arnold agree that poetry is philosophical and expresses moral ideas. I must confess that I myself prefer to call it metaphysical.

The first and obvious remark to make is that the happiest effects are often achieved both in poetry and prose by a more or less even combination of the abstract and the concrete. It is one of the chief and characteristic excellencies of Shakespeare; for example:

Not countenanced with boys and beggary (2 *H. IV.*)

To lie in cold obstruction and to rot (*M. for M.*)

Even at thy teat thou hadst thy tyranny (*T. A.*)

And silken dalliance in the wardrobe lies¹ (*H. V.*)

Shakespeare's practice in this respect is the subject of the latter part of my essay.

A closer investigation of the poets reveals the fact that there is far more variety in the use of abstract words than appears at first sight. We shall find the simplest use, the normal use of prose, in Shelley:

He has outsoared the shadow of our night,

Envy and calumny and hate and pain,

And that unrest which men miscall delight

Can touch him not and torture not again.

(*Adonais*, ll. 352ff.)

¹ Cf.: And barbarous opulence jewel-thick
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands. (*Maud.*)

or in Housman :

All thoughts to rive the heart are here, and all are vain :
Horror and scorn and hate and fear and indignation . . .

(*A Shropshire Lad*, XLVIII.)

These accumulations are effective enough. They bear out the quotation of Hazlitt already given ; ‘ Fear is poetry, hope is poetry, love is poetry : . . . ’ But there is a time for everything under heaven and the poet must be sparing in his use of abstracts. The poet must reserve them for particular moments when he has worked our emotions to the right pitch, so that we receive them emotionally rather than intellectually. We have to feel them and not think them, as as we should, say, in an essay by Hume. Otherwise the poet will become merely didactic as does Pope in the *Essay on Man*. In the first book of *Paradise Lost* Milton elaborates his magnificent description of the Arch Fiend and his mate prone on the flood of fire, and gradually increases the tension until the climax of :

All is not lost ; th’ unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield,
And what is else not to be overcome.

These lines, abstract in idea, but direct in language and versification, stand out stylistically from their context, just as in *Adonais* the lines quoted above stand out.

Spenser, to take a very different example, in his *Epithalamium* devotes many stanzas to assembling the pageantry of his scene and exciting our expectations. He then paints the portrait of the bride in concrete imagery ; her eyes like sapphires, her cheeks ruddied apples, her breast uncruddled cream, her neck a marble tower. Thus we are brought to the stanza which although less coloured than the rest is the central point of the poem. We are led on,

Ascending up with many a stately stair
To honour’s seat and chastity’s sweet bower,

where we may learn ‘ the inward beauty of her lively sprite ’

and a stanza of abstractions follows. Then we return once more to the visual scene :

Open the temple gates unto my love . . .
And all the pillars deck with garlands trim.

Let us now survey the field. A sheaf of samples, selected from the beginning of our poetry down to the present day, will prove at once how complicated the variations are, and how subtle the differences :

To Pite ran I, al bespreynt with teres,
To preyen hir on Crueltee me awreke ;
But er I might with any worde out-breke,
Or tellen any of my peynes smerte,
I found her deed and buried in an herte.
(Chaucer, *Compleynt unto Pite.*)

Affliction is enamoured of thy parts,
And thou art wedded to calamity. (Romeo and Juliet.)

That smooth-fac'd gentleman, tickling Commodity.
(King John.)

Sluttery to such neat excellence oppos'd
Would make desire vomit emptiness,
Not so allur'd to feed. (Cymbeline.)

For his art did expresse
A quintessence even from nothingnesse,
From dull privations, and leane emptinesse ;
He ruin'd mee, and I am re-begot
Of absence, darknesse, death ; things which are not.
(Donne : *Nocturnall.*)

My Love is of a birth as rare
As 'tis for object strange and high :
It was begotten by despair
Upon Impossibility. (Marvell : *Definition of Love.*)

Rigor now is gon to bed,
And Advice with scrupulous head,
Strict Age, and sowre Severity
With their grave Saws in slumber ly. (Comus.)

She all night long her amorous descant sung ;
Silence was pleas'd. (Paradise Lost.)

Satan bowing low
His gray dissimulation, disappear'd
Into thin Air diffus'd. (*Paradise Regained.*)

Brown Exercise rejoiced to hear ;
And Youth leaped up and seized his beechen spear.
(Collins: *Ode to the Passions.*)

Cruelty has a Human Heart,
And Jealousy a Human Face ;
Terror the Human Form Divine,
And Secrecy the Human Dress.
(Blake: *A Divine Image.*)

Ah, sister ! Desolation is a delicate thing :
It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air,
But treads with lulling footstep and fans with silent wing
The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and
gentlest bear. (Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound.*)

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
No casual mistress, but a wife ?
(Tennyson: *In Memoriam.*)

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow.

For Thine is the kingdom.

(T. S. Eliot, *The Hollow Men.*)

The quotations are in chronological order. How far do they fall into groups according to their character ? One is tempted to pair the two lines from *Romeo and Juliet* with those from *In Memoriam*, much, I think, to Tennyson's disadvantage. The personifications can be segregated ; Chaucer's Pity, tickling Commodity, the lines from *Comus* and Collins. Slutterness in the extraordinary *Cymbeline* passage is not exactly a personification. The use of abstracts here eludes definition. The late W. P. Ker would have got round it by saying simply, 'It is Shakespeare'. Even between Milton's 'Advice with scrupulous head' and the 'Brown Exercise' of Collins I detect a difference. Collins is pictorial, Milton is not. The abstrac-

tions of Collins are Olympian or at least heroic; Milton is thinking of men; his Rigor and Strict Age are of the same order as Shakespeare's:

Crabbed Age and Youth
Cannot live together.

A second group might include Donne, Shelley, and T. S. Eliot (although their metrical effects keep them apart). But again we must recognize certain distinctions. Donne calls absence a thing; Shelley calls desolation a thing; it is significant. In Donne, however, abstract words nearly always define states of mind or of being: the abstractions of Shelley are spiritual; he peoples the universe with influences and spirits. Then Eliot employs philosophical terms in a way which can be paralleled in Donne. His *idea* and *reality* are similar to *nothingness*, *truth*, *elements*, *Angel's purity*, *the intelligences*, and other similar notions to be found in the *Songs and Sonets*. Here Donne is more emotional than Eliot; an undercurrent of emotion runs from the epithet *lean* to the verb *ruined* and the noun *darkness*. Eliot reserves his slighter emotional effect for the close of the paragraph, in the word *Shadow* and the distant echo of the Paternoster. With some hesitation I put together the stanza from Marvell and the stanza from Blake. Blake is not using personification *but a reverse process*. He is not thinking of Cruelty as Chaucer does, or of Jealousy as a green-eyed monster, or of Terror in the eighteenth-century convention:

Ah Fear! ah frantic Fear!
I see, I see thee near,
I know thy hurried step, thy haggard eye!

He is thinking of humanity; of man, cruel at heart, jealous in look, a bully, and a hypocrite. Marvell also reverses the normal process of personification; but instead of humanity he is speaking of himself. Of course in both stanzas there is more than meets the eye, which is not the case with 'that smooth-faced gentleman tickling Commodity'. Marvell is intellectual, Blake is emotional; but both imply more than they state.

The scope of the subject has been indicated, I must now particularize. The two aspects I select are personification and Shakespeare's use of abstract words.

In medieval literature personification is the handmaid of allegory. Allegory was a specific and most popular form of poetry. The *Roman de la Rose* had a numerous posterity; *The Temple of Glass*, *The King's Quair*, *The Golden Targe*, *The Palace of Honour*, *The Pastime of Pleasure*. In these, personifications supply the whole machinery of the poem: they are the poem: and they lie therefore outside the subject of this essay, which is one of diction (except in so far as the abstract words in later poetry may look back to them and take on a medieval colour, in William Morris perhaps, or Rossetti). Graunde Amoure, False Report, Fair Having, Bel Accueil, Constrained Abstinence, these are the lords and ladies, in the idealized world of medieval chivalry. They achieve their apotheosis in the *Fuery Queen*. Allegory does not play such an important part again until the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and personification is not so seriously treated until the eighteenth century, where instead of knights and lorn damsels we have chill shadows of the Olympian hierarchy, similar to those Georgian columns of English ducal houses that imitate the temples of Greece and Rome. With the *Roman de la Rose* must be named *Pearl* and *Piers Plowman*; the first an ideal ecstasy in which symbolism takes the place of abstract personages, while Langland, on the other hand, with his satire and realism turns Gluttony and Avarice into human beings which are nearer to Shakespeare's 'tickling Commodity', to Ben Jonson's Fastidious Brisk, Sir Epicure Mammon, Moscha, and Brainworm, and to Bunyan's Mr. Byends and Mr. Facing Both Ways. The central and most significant figure of medieval allegorical poetry is undoubtedly Love, Amor, or Cupido. He is a composite character, at once the Love or Charity of Christian Doctrine, the primal Eros of Hesiodic theogony, the divine aspiration of Plato's philosophy (adapted by the neo-Platonists and mystics to the Christian religion), and thirdly the god of the troubadours, whose lyrics were indebted for their refined analysis

of the physical passion to the *Ars Amatoria* of Ovid. And to these streams of thought and feeling must be added the late classical romance of *Cupid and Psyche*.¹

Perhaps more important than the *Roman de la Rose* are the medieval morality plays, and the interludes which followed them. The scriptural and legendary persons of the miracles were replaced by abstractions, and the Bible stories by allegories of human life. There are three chief motives; first, the Reconciliation of the Heavenly Virtues, suggested originally by the words of the eighty-fifth Psalm: 'Mercy and Truth are met together: Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other'. Secondly, the débat-like theme of the conflict of Vice and Virtue which begins with the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius and ends with the *Faustus* of Marlowe. Lastly, the representation of Death inspired by the *danse macabre*, such a favourite subject with the engravers and fresco painters of the Middle Ages. Round the character of Man, called Infans, Humanum Genus, Anima, or Mankind, are grouped the Cardinal Virtues and the Seven Deadly Sins, and such abstractions as Good Deeds, Five Wits, Mischief, Sad Circumspection, Folly, Cloked Collusion. We read that 'the iiij dowters schuld be clad in mentelys, Mercy in wyth, rythwysnesse in red al togedyr, Trewthe in sad grene, & Pes al in blake'. These abstractions are more intellectual and less ideal, less pictorial also, than Sir Mirth and Dame Gladnesse and their company in the *Roman de la Rose*. Virtues and Vices must have been far more vivid to the medieval public than they have ever been since. The effect continued for a considerable time. The Elizabethans were not hostile to a poetic drama which uttered moral ideas, and the following century produced *Paradise Lost* as well as the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Milton's note-book outlines a scheme for presenting the fall of Adam in the form of a medieval morality. The persons include Justice, Mercy, and Wisdom, Conscience and Heavenly Love, Labour, Grief, Hatred, Sickness, Famine, Ignorance, Discontent, who are mutes. And so after all it is by no means surprising that the personifications in *Comus*,

¹ Cf. Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, vol. i, chap. v.

quoted above, Rigor, Advice, and Severity, have a different flavour from the abstractions in the odes of Collins.

Sackville's *Induction* to the *Mirror for Magistrates* and the conclusion of Chapman's *Euthymiae Raptus* represent the survival of the medieval personifications in Elizabethan literature. Spenser's epic poem is a pageant of all the abstractions of the medieval allegories and the medieval drama. In the twelfth canto of the third book the masque of Cupid proceeds while

a most delitious harmony,
In full straunge notes was sweetly heard to sound,
That the rare sweetnesse of the melody
The feeble senses wholly did confound,
And the fraile soule in deepe delight nigh dround.

Britomart watches the passing of Doubt in a discoloured coat, looking askew, Fear pale as ashes, starting at his own shadow, Hope clad in silken samite, Grief all in sable, Fury in rags, Cruelty with a knife in her naked breast :

And after them a rude confused rout
Of persons flockt, whose names is hard to read :
Emongst them was sterne Strife, and Anger stout,
Unquiet Care, and fond Unthrifthead,
Lewd Losse of Time, and Sorrow seeming dead,
Inconstant Chaunge, and false Disloyaltie,
Consuming Riotise, and guilty Dread
Of heavenly vengeance, faint Infirmities,
Vile Pouertie, and lastly Death with infamie.

Spenser every now and again lets loose among these tenuous bloodless creatures a pagan deity :

The first was Fancy, like a louely boy,
Of rare aspect, and beautie without peare ;
Matchable either to that ympe of Troy,
Whom Ioue did loue, and chose his cup to beare,
Or that same daintie lad, which was so deare
To great Alcides, that when as he dyde,
He wailed womanlike with many a teare,
And euery wood, and euery valley wyde
He fild with Hylas name ; the Nymphes eke Hylas cryde.

The combination of Christian morality and pagan legend, the mingling of 'mythological imagery such as a College easily supplies' with 'the most awful and sacred truths' was essayed long before Johnson turned his big guns upon *Lycidas*. In the words of Hardy's glass-stainer:

Martha I paint, and dream of Hera's brow,
Mary, and think of Aphrodite's form.

Beside Spenser's *Masque of Cupid* we shall do well to put a passage from *Paradise Lost*:

At length a universal hubbub wild
Of stunning sounds and voices all confus'd
Borne through the hollow dark assaults his ear
With loudest vehemence . . .

and by them stood

Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name
Of Demogorgon; Rumor next and Chance,
And Tumult and Confusion all embroil'd,
And Discord with a thousand various mouths.

These are no medieval or Spenserian personages clothed in symbolical garments of silken samite or sad green, carrying appropriate stage properties in their hands. Milton's abstractions are abstract indeed; more abstract than their true ancestry which is to be found in the sixth book of Virgil's *Aeneid*:

Vestibulum ante ipsum primisque in faucibus Orci
Luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curae;
Pallentesque habitant Morbi, tristisque Senectus,
Et Metus et malesuada Fames, ac turpis Egestas,
Terribiles visu formae, Letumque, Labosque;
Tum consanguineus Leti Sopor, et mala mentis
Gaudia, mortiferumque adverso in limine Bellum,
Ferreique Eumenidum thalami, et Discordia demens,
Vipereum crinem vittis innexa cruentis.

Virgil goes on to describe the giant elm that spread its branching shade before the infernal gate. Dreams and False Visions harbour in the branches. Was it this which suggested the famous passage in Wordsworth's Miltonic poem *Yew-Trees*?

beneath whose sable roof
 Of boughs, as if for festal purpose decked
 With unrejoicing berries—ghostly Shapes
 May meet at noontide ; Fear and trembling Hope,
 Silence and Foresight ; Death the Skeleton
 And Time the Shadow.

Wordsworth in three lines seems to convey as much as Spenser's elaborate description which fills a score of stanzas. It is hard to analyse the effect. Hope and Fear, Death and Time, these are familiar friends enough, but we find in their company Silence and Foresight, a more uncommon pair of abstractions. Yet Silence makes the right third with Fear and Death ; and Foresight with Hope and Time, if we seek for the unconscious links of association. There is such economy of words here that each one has full value. Few poets would have called Hope trembling. Spenser describes her as a handsome maid of cheerful look ; in poor Collins she has an enchanted smile and golden air. But Wordsworth is not picturing, he is thinking. Hope in the human heart is inseparable from Fear ; with the epithet 'trembling' Wordsworth makes it so. If we inquire why Time the Shadow seems so right, so inevitable after Death the Skeleton, we shall do well to recall the phrase 'the shadow of Death'. Coming events throw their shadow before. Time, that is to say growing old, is the shadow cast by Death the Skeleton.

Death the Skeleton is the dominating figure of the medieval drama, just as Love is the central figure of the medieval allegorical poetry. In Shakespeare the medieval conception survives and is powerfully expressed :

within the hollow crown
 That rounds the mortal temples of a king
 Keeps Death his court, and there the antick sits,
 Scoffing his state, and grinning at his pomp ;
 Allowing him a breath, a little scene,
 To monarchize. (*Richard II.*)
 O! now doth Death line his dead chaps with steel ;
 The swords of soldiers are his teeth, his fangs ;
 And now he feasts, mousing the flesh of men,
 In undetermin'd differences of kings. (*King John.*)

Needless to say Shakespeare personifies Death in other guises. Not the least remarkable of them is Death the lover. There are three striking passages of this kind, the first rhetorical, the second lyrical, and the third dramatic. In the first Death is still the medieval skeleton :

Death, death : O, amiable, lovely death !
 Thou odoriferous stench ! sound rottenness !
 Arise forth from the couch of lasting night,
 Thou hate and terror to prosperity,
 And I will kiss thy detestable bones,
 And put my eyeballs in thy vaulty brows,
 And ring these fingers with thy household worms,
 And stop this gap of breath with fulsome dust,
 And be a carrion monster like thyself ;
 Come, grin on me ; and I will think thou smil'st
 And buss thee as thy wife. (King John.)

In *Romeo and Juliet* we have Capulet's :

Death lies on her like an untimely frost
 Upon the sweetest flower of all the field

developed, as is so characteristic of Shakespeare at this period, into a conceit :

O son ! the night before thy wedding-day
 Hath Death lain with thy wife. There she lies,
 Flower as she was, deflowered by him.
 Death is my son-in-law, Death is my heir ;
 My daughter he hath wedded.

And the same idea is mingled with imagery in Romeo's final soliloquy :

Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,
 Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty :
 Thou art not conquered ; beauty's ensign yet
 Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
 And Death's pale flag is not advanced there.

. . . Ah, dear Juliet,
 Why art thou yet so fair ? Shall I believe
 That unsubstantial Death is amorous,
 And that the lean abhorred monster keeps
 Thee here in dark to be his paramour ?

Finally, when we come to *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare turns the very same conception to account as a significant touch in the amorous character of the Egyptian Queen:

The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch
Which hurts and is desir'd.

In Milton Death is neither the skeleton nor the ravisher; he is an abstraction rather than a personification:

The other shape,
If shape it might be call'd that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint or limb,
Or substance might be called that shadow seem'd,
For each seem'd either; black it stood as Night,
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
And shook a dreadful dart; what seem'd his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.

This phantasm or shapeless shape addresses Satan; Milton follows the speech with:

So spake the grisly terror.

It is significant that he does not write Terror with a capital, but refuses the personification. We may compare Juliet's description of her nurse 'Ancient damnation'. The only passage in poetry comparable with Milton's description of Death comparable, that is, in its accumulation of negatives, is Donne's *Nocturnall*, from which a quotation has been given above.

After this passage the personifications of Death, Terror, Murder, Revenge, and the rest in eighteenth-century poetry seem feeble indeed. But this is not the moment to flog a dead horse. Besides, when the horse was still kicking at the beginning of the last century, Lord Macaulay lashed and flicked his whip like any circus-master. All that is frigid and foolish in the personifications of minor eighteenth-century poetry, is epitomized in Robert Montgomery. Macaulay quotes a passage:

Then, blood-stain'd Murder, bare thy hideous arm,
And thou, Rebellion, welter in thy storm:
Awake, ye spirits of avenging crime;
Burst from your bonds, and battle with the time.

He comments :

Mr. Robert Montgomery is fond of personification ; he belongs we need not say, to that school of poets who hold that nothing more is necessary to a personification in poetry than to begin a word with a capital letter. Murder may, without impropriety, bare her arm, as she did long ago in Mr. Campbell's *Pleasures of Hope*. But what possible motive Rebellion can have for weltering in her storm, what avenging crime may be, who its spirit may be, why they should burst from their bonds, what their bonds may be, why they should battle with the time, and what the time may be, and what a battle between the time and the spirit of avenging crime would resemble, we must confess ourselves quite unable to understand.

(*Critical and Historical Essays*, vol. I.)

Shelley, however (if we pass by Blake's bright apple of wrath that stretched his foe beneath the tree, and the invisible worm which in dark secret love destroys the crimson joy of the rose), Shelley personifies Death in a new and living form :

Though Ruin now Love's shadow be
Following him, destroyingly,
On Death's white and winged steed,
Which the fleetest cannot flee,
Trampling down both flower and weed,
Man and beast, and foul and fair,
Like a tempest through the air ;
Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,
Woundless though in heart or limb.

(*Prometheus Unbound*.)

The image is inspired by the sixth chapter of The Revelation :

And I looked, and behold a pale horse : and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.

When we come to the Victorian Age and its poet-laureate, Death has become a vague and kindly figure, vague not so much by design as because Tennyson himself is vague. Death is :

The Shadow cloaked from head to foot,
Who keeps the keys of all the creeds. (*In Memoriam*.)

Nevertheless, we find in Tennyson, in the most unusual of his poems, a revival of the medieval skeleton, ironic, and macabre :

You are bones, and what of that?

Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
Is but modell'd on the skull.

Death is king, and Vivat Rex!

Tread a measure on the stones,

Madam—if I know your sex,

From the fashion of your bones. (*Vision of Sin.*)

I will take the opportunity here of saying something of Shelley, of all poets the fondest of abstractions. Lord Macaulay, who perhaps is too little known or regarded as a literary critic to-day, when Hazlitt has 'lurched all swords of the garland', positively ranks Shelley with Bunyan in this respect :

Bunyan is almost the only writer who ever gave to the abstract the interest of the concrete. ['And Shakespeare', one is tempted to murmur.] In the works of many celebrated authors men are mere personifications. We have not a jealous man but jealousy, not a traitor, but perfidy ; not a patriot but patriotism. The mind of Bunyan, on the contrary, was so imaginative that personifications, when he dealt with them, became men. A dialogue between two qualities, in his dream, has more dramatic effect than a dialogue between two human beings in most plays. In this respect the genius of Bunyan bore a great resemblance to that of a man who had very little else in common with him, Percy Bysshe Shelley. The strong imagination of Shelley made him an idolater in his own despite. Out of the most indefinite terms of a hard, cold, dark metaphysical system, he made a gorgeous Pantheon full of beautiful, majestic and life-like forms. He turned atheism itself into mythology, rich with visions as glorious as the gods that live in the marble of Pheidias, or the virgin saints that smile on us from the canvas of Murillo. The Spirit of Beauty, the Principle of Good, the Principle of Evil, when he treated them, ceased to be abstractions. They took shape and colour. They were no longer mere words, but 'intelligible forms'; 'fair humanities'; objects of love, of adoration, or of fear. As there can be no

stronger sign of a mind destitute of the poetical faculty than that tendency which was so common among the writers of the French school to turn images into abstractions, Venus, for example, into Love, Minerva into Wisdom, Mars into War, and Bacchus into Festivity, so there can be no stronger sign of a mind truly poetical than a disposition to reverse this abstracting process, and to make individuals out of generalities.

(*Critical and Historical Essays*, vol. I.)

Here one might again murmur Shakespeare's name in confirmation of the truth of the last sentence. Macaulay's remarks upon Shelley admit of question. The personifications were objects of love to Shelley, it is true, but Shelley was an unusual lover and husband. I have quoted the passage at length because the comparison of Bunyan and Shelley is a startling one, and, like all Macaulay's ideas, it loses nothing in the telling. The abstractions of Shelley's poetry possess reality only in the world of Shelley's imagination, and that world is one in which not even all lovers of poetry can move with freedom. Macaulay's claim can be best tested by looking once again at the earlier stanzas of *Adonais*. Keats is pictured as reaching Rome,

where kingly Death
Keeps his pale Court in beauty and decay.

At the door of his sick chamber,

Invisible Corruption waits to trace
His extreme way to her dim dwelling place;
The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
Soothe her pale rage.

Round the cold heart of the dead poet mourn quick Dreams, the passion-winged Ministers of thought. One fans him with her moonlit wings; one from a lucid urn of starry dew washes his light limbs; another Splendour (we may compare Milton's 'celestial ardours' as an angelic title) alights on his mouth:

And others came . . . Desires and Adorations,
Winged Persuasions and veiled Destinies,
Splendours, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies;

And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
 And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
 Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,
 Came in slow pomp ;—the moving pomp might seem
 Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

All he had loved, and moulded into thought,
 From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound
 Lamented Adonais. * Morning sought
 Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,
 Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,
 Dimmed the ærial eyes that kindle day ;
 Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
 Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
 And the wild Winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

Nobody denies the beauty of the ten stanzas to which I refer ; the passage should be closely contrasted with Spenser's *Masque of Cupid*, which I have already treated. Spenser's abstractions are personified in the medieval convention ; Shelley's abstractions are spirits of Shelley's own imagined universe. Spenser merely describes and orchestrates, but Shelley identifies himself with each in turn. Perhaps it would be truer to say that he is in love with each in turn. His abstractions are, as a rule, imagined as angelic and feminine. The angels of Milton, whom they frequently recall, are definitely male. For Shelley the skylark was a blithe spirit, not a bird ; he himself was a pardlike Spirit, a Love in desolation masked, a falling shower, a breaking billow. No shape in his poetry is defined, but only glimpsed, felt, suggested by a succession of images. His most successful poem is the *Ode to the West Wind*, one of the few in which unity is preserved, and which ascends to the triumphant climax of the identification of the spirit of the poet with the fierce spirit of the wind. Shelley really could be the west wind. His sympathy was with the forces of nature, and it was as intense as Bunyan's sympathy with human beings. When Shelley writes :

The nightingale's complaint
 It dies upon her heart ;—
 As I must on thine,
 Oh, beloved as thou art ! (*The Indian Serenade.*)

he is at one with the music of the nightingale with an intensity which withers up Tennyson's

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake :
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me. (*The Princess.*)

Adonais naturally raises the question of Keats. Shall we find in his poetry the abstractions which Shelley imagines hovering round his corpse. I think not. We shall not find veiled Destinies, twilight Phantasies, glimmering Incarnations, but creatures more human and more Greek. Did not Clare complain that Keats saw behind every bush a thrumming Apollo? In the *Adonais* passage the only figure who resembles the creations of Keats is Morning with hair unbound in her eastern watch-tower. On the other hand, in the *Ode to Indolence*, where Keats writes in the very spirit of Shelley,

My sleep had been embroider'd with dim dreams,
the Phantoms that Keats sees, Love, Ambition, and Poesy, are in sandals and white robes, like figures on a marble urn. Or again the contrast between the two poets in this respect is made clear if we read the *Ode to the West Wind* and the *Ode to Autumn*. Shelley's west wind is a spirit, wild, fierce, unseen, destroyer and preserver; Keats's Autumn is simply a peasant woman asleep in the half-reap'd furrow, or watching the oozings of the cider-press. Whereas Shelley personifies thoughts and dreams and sensuous feelings, Keats gives abstract names to human forms. 'Shelley,' says Macaulay, 'out of the most indefinite terms of a hard, cold, dark, metaphysical system, made a gorgeous Pantheon of beautiful, majestic, and life-like forms.' Keats, on the other hand, found the Olympian hierarchy inside the covers of Lemprière's dictionary. The world of his imagination was as the world of reality. 'Was it a vision or a waking dream?' he asks, after hearing the nightingale; and in the *Ode to Psyche*:

Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see
The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes?

Shelley lived entirely in his own intellectual and imaginative world, but Keats moved almost at will from the world of sensuous experience to a world of vision. In the temple of his mind (to use a Shakespearian metaphor) he serves the pagan deities; it is not the lip-service paid by eighteenth-century versifiers to the gods and goddesses of Greece. His Melancholy

dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;
 And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
 Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
 Turning to Poison while the bee-mouth sips;
 Ay in the very temple of delight
 Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
 Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
 Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
 His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
 And be among her cloudy triumphs hung.

(*Ode to Melancholy.*)

This is a more difficult, a more thoughtful passage than any of the *Adonais* stanzas already quoted. And how thin, how artificial beside it seems Collins's use of a similar image:

See, Mercy, see, with pure and loaded hands,
 Before thy shrine my country's genius stands,
 And decks thy altar still, though pierced with many a wound.

(*Ode to Mercy.*)

I have touched upon personification in various forms, of which the most flourishing are to be found in the Middle Ages and the eighteenth century. Personification is as essential to the medieval moralities and allegories as it is frigid and unreal in the heroic couplets and the pseudo-classical odes of the poets from Pope to Crabbe. In the first case it is a mode of thought, in the second it is superimposed decoration. Gray alone succeeds in imparting to his abstractions something of the Roman gravity with which the same device (uncommon in classical poetry, although mentioned as a rhetorical figure by Quintilian) is employed in the odes of Horace. There is a fine example in the first ode of Book III:

Contracta pisces aequora sentiunt,
 Jactis in altum molibus: huc frequens
 Caementa demittit redemptor
 Cum famulis, dominusque terrae
 Fastidiosus; sed Timor et Minae
 Scandunt eodem quo dominus: neque
 Decedit aerata triremi, et
 Post equitem sedet atra Cura.

The sudden turn which comes with *sed Timor et Minae*, etc., is comparable to Marvell's:

But at my back I always hear
 Time's winged chariot hurrying near.

Gray's personifications,—dreaming Sloth, painted Flatt'ry, bright-eyed Science, soft-eyed Melancholy,—appear at first sight to belong to the eighteenth-century stock-in-trade. A few, however, make us hope better things of him—Ignorance with looks profound, scepter'd Care, Servitude that hugs her chain—and in the two following stanzas from the Eton College Ode, Gray is using his mind; he means what he says:

These shall the fury Passions tear,
 The vultures of the mind,
 Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,
 And Shame that skulks behind;
 Or pining Love shall waste their youth,
 Or Jealousy with rankling tooth,
 That inly gnaws the secret heart,
 And Envy wan, and faded Care,
 Grim-visag'd comfortless Despair,
 And Sorrow's piercing dart.
 Ambition this shall tempt to rise,
 Then whirl the wretch from high,
 To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,
 And grinning Infamy.
 The stings of Falsehood those shall try,
 And hard Unkindness' alter'd eye,
 That mocks the tear it forc'd to flow;
 And keen Remorse with blood defil'd,
 And moody Madness laughing wild
 Amid severest woe.

There is some weight, some power in these lines; the abstractions are not mere personifications, they are ideas. Collins's *Ode to the Passions* may be more romantic and more musical, but it is less profound. Gray learnt something from Shakespeare and something from Horace. Even so we are bound to confess that the stanzas must yield to the economy and simplicity of Blake's:

Cruelty has a Human Heart
And Jealousy a Human Face;
Terror the Human Form Divine,
And Secrecy the Human Dress.

The personifications of Collins are most happy where they are indebted to the minor poems of Milton and to *Comus*, where they are not anaemic goddesses but medieval pilgrims and hermits, or akin to the fairies and genii, which Johnson tells us poor Collins loved.

In Spenser, in Milton, in Gray, in Blake, and Shelley, and Keats, personification is treated with individuality; nevertheless, I think most readers would agree that it is not one of the more felicitous devices of English poetry; not, at any rate, in its most direct form. How then are the poets to make abstract words really effective? It is my original question and, in returning to it, I will return also to Dr. Johnson and William Wordsworth. Wordsworth condemns the hubbub of words with which Johnson paraphrases a passage in Proverbs. I will once more put the passages side by side:

How long wilt thou sleep, O Sluggard? when wilt thou arise
out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little
folding of thy hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as
one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

How long shall sloth usurp thy useless hours,
Unnerve thy vigour and enchain thy powers,
While artful shades thy downy couch enclose,
And soft solicitation courts repose?
Amidst the drowsy charms of dull delight,
Year chases year with unremitted flight,
Till Want, now following, fraudulent and slow,
Shall spring to seize thee like an ambushed foe.

Johnson's version is really desperate. Yet the very same style delights us in the pages of *Rasselas*. These clogging and unskilful adjectives will not make up for the loss of the vivid phrase 'a little folding of thy hands to sleep'; and Johnson's personification of Want is perfectly lifeless. He has struggled to put vitality into an abstract passage by introducing as a climax the image 'shall spring to seize thee'. The suggestion is a new but not a happy one. Disaster may spring, but not Want. The idea in the original is, surely, of Want relentlessly dogging the footsteps and overtaking its victim:

As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe
And forward bends his head.

The passage from Proverbs is remarkable, and it is highly characteristic of the translation of the Bible in that very particular with which this inquiry is concerned. Poverty and want are more vivid here than most of the abstractions and personifications already quoted. The translation of the Bible is stylistically supreme because of its combination of the abstract and concrete. And this also is the peculiar excellence of Elizabethan literature and of the consummation of Elizabethan literature, I mean Shakespeare. It is the power of transition from the world of sensation to the world of thought, from the actual to the intellectual, from the object to the idea: 'Go to the ant, thou Sluggard, and be wise'; 'The almond tree shall flourish and the grasshopper shall be a burden and desire shall fail'. This faculty was gradually lost during the seventeenth century, and despite the efforts of certain poets of the Romantic Revival, who harked back to the Elizabethans for inspiration, it has never fully been recovered. Wordsworth has a right to show up Johnson. Wordsworth wrote:

Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

The use of the word *friend* here is Elizabethan; it is Shakespearean.

Shakespeare is at one with the translators of the Bible in his combinations of abstract and concrete.¹ The Hebrew idiom left its mark upon the finest flower of our poetry. Compare, for instance, with 'So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man', Shakespeare's:

When sorrows come, they come not single spies
But in battallions. (*Hamlet*.)

Compare Job's 'Iniquity stoppeth her mouth' with Othello's 'Heaven stops the nose at it and the moon winks'. Or again Job's 'I have said to corruption, Thou art my father; to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister' with

Affliction is enamoured of thy parts,
And thou art wedded to calamity,

and 'worms that are thy chambermaids' in *Romeo and Juliet*. As one turns over the pages of Proverbs, of the Prophets, of Ecclesiastes, of the Song of Solomon, the Psalms, and the Apocrypha, how multitudinous are the images, metaphors, and similes, drawn from the everyday life of the East; the partridge on her eggs, the crackling of thorns under a pot, the fig-tree, and the vine-press, ointment, and honeycomb, the fuller's soap, the refiner's fire, choice silver, and rubies, and fine gold, the roe in the hand of the hunter, the bird in the hand of the fowler, the sands of the sea, the fountain in a desert place, buckler, and two-edged sword, the woman that travaileth, the weaned child. And linked closely with these we find over and over again, iniquity, righteousness, wisdom, vanity, sin. Consider such sentences as these:

My transgression is sealed up in a bag and thou sewest up mine iniquity. (*Job*.)

Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble. (*Job*.)

A faithful ambassador is health. (*Proverbs*.)

¹ In connexion with this and with what follows, cf. my *Words and Poetry*, pp. 179 ff. The Hogarth Press, 1928.

Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. (Isaiah.)

Winnow not with every wind. (Ecclesiastes.)

For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water. And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together.

(Isaiah.)

I will wash mine hands in innocency. (Proverbs.)

The words of his mouth were soft as butter, but war was in his heart. (Psalms.)

Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit. (Jeremiah.)

Let not mercy and truth forsake thee; bind them about thy neck. (Proverbs.)

Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope. (Isaiah.)

Truth is fallen in the street and equity cannot enter. (Wisdom.)

Is it after all so surprising that in Shakespeare and to a lesser degree in all the Elizabethans, 'every word is a picture'? Is it so surprising to find such phrases, metaphors and personifications as 'fate hid in an auger hole',¹ 'liberty plucks justice by the nose',² 'a very riband in the cap of youth',³ 'O that deceit should dwell in such a gorgeous palace',⁴ 'thrust thy hand . . . into the purse of rich prosperity',⁵ 'you fur your gloves with reason',⁶ 'anger's my meat; I sup upon myself',⁷ 'Ill-weav'd ambition, how much art thou shrunk',⁸

Distinction with a broad and powerful fan
Puffing at all, winnows the light away. (T. & C.)

Has any other writer ever achieved such combinations of abstract and concrete? It is a style only to be matched by the translation of the Bible.

A favourite metaphor both in the Old and in the New Testament is paralleled by an Elizabethan lyric. In Isaiah

¹ *Macbeth*.

² *M. for M.*

³ *Hamlet*.

⁴ *R. and J.*

⁵ *K. J.*

⁶ *T. and C.*

⁷ *Coriolanus*.

⁸ *1 H. IV.*

we have: 'And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins', and again, 'he hath clothed me with garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness'. In the Epistle to the Ephesians we find; 'Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace'. Beside these I quote Raleigh's:

Give me my scallop-shell of quiet
My staff of faith to walk upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
My bottle of salvation.

Personification in a more protracted and definite form is to be found in the Old Testament and the New. Two examples may be quoted for purposes of comparison with those already examined, as a clue to the difference between the Elizabethan usage and that of other poets. In Proverbs we read that 'Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets; Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table'; and in the Book of Wisdom this personification is elaborated over many chapters.

Wisdom is easily seen of them that love her, and found of such as seek her; in her is an understanding spirit, holy, one only, manifold, subtle, lively, clear, undefiled, plain, not subject to hurt, loving the thing that is good, quick, which cannot be letted, ready to do good, kind to man, steadfast, sure, free from care, having all power, overseeing all things . . . I loved her and sought her out from my youth, I desired to make her my spouse, and was a lover of her beauty . . . Who of all that are is a more cunning workman than she? . . . After I come into my own house, I will repose myself with her; for her conversation hath no bitterness; and to live with her hath no sorrow, but mirth and joy. (vi. 14, vii. 22, 23, viii. 6, 16.)

The central part of this passage inevitably suggests:

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not;
charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave
itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked,

thinketh no evil. . . . And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity.

(1 Corinthians xiii. 4, 5, 13.)

The conclusion which I propose is a simple one ; if we take into account the metaphors and similes and personifications of the Bible, the abstract and concrete combinations of the Hebrew idiom, the parables of the Gospels, if we keep in mind the significant fact that the Middle Ages hit upon a verse in the Psalms and employed it for a dramatic purpose, if we appreciate fully the personifications of medieval Allegory and Morality, we shall understand that to the Elizabethan reader and the Elizabethan audience abstractions, words expressing moral concepts, were ten thousand times more real, more living, more intelligible than they have ever been to a more educated and sophisticated posterity. In Shakespeare, in fact, we have the union of poetry and philosophy, whose paths since Shakespeare have more and more diverged.

Shakespeare's practice in this, as in every other respect, demands more space than the tail-end of an essay. I consider it the most remarkable aspect of his style. All the gradations that lie between personification and metaphor in the use of abstract words are to be instanced in his writing. His medieval images of death have been quoted above. In connexion with them I would mention Shakespeare's use of *envious*. Shakespeare applies the epithet to the processes and mutations of nature. 'Each envious briar his weary legs doth scratch', 'the envious clouds', 'an envious worm', 'the envious flood', 'an envious sneaping frost', 'some envious surge', 'the envious siege of watery Neptune'.

More striking and more intellectual than Death is Shakespeare's personification of Time. The sense of Time is one of the most dominating themes in his poems and his plays. The personification first appears in one of Lucrece's studied rhetorical tirades ; and with Time, 'the ceaseless lackey to eternity', is linked her servant Opportunity, who resembles the 'tickling Commodity' of King John. Time also inspires some of a series of the later sonnets (cvi-cxxvi) in which with his attributes of bending sickle and fickle glass he has

a medieval character, and where in the climax he is termed a 'suborned informer'. Most successful of all are the frequent personifications in *Troilus and Cressida*, whose style belongs to a date not far distant from these later sonnets. Here Time is 'that old common arbitrator', and:

Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back,
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,
A great-sized monster of ingritudes . . .
For time is like a fashionable host
That slightly shakes his parting guest by the hand,
And with his arms outstretched, as he would fly,
Grasps in the comer . . .
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all
To envious and calumniating time.

And again :

Injurious time now with a robber's haste
Crams his rich thievery up, he knows not how ;
As many farewells as be stars in heaven,
With distinct breath and consign'd kisses to them,
He fumbles up into a loose adieu.

It is the Time-Sense which gives unity to this difficult play. For the lovers Time moves swiftly, for the warriors Time stands still.

Shakespeare has other personifications of various kinds. Thersites' 'How the devil Luxury with his fat rump and potato finger tickles the two together' is clearly medieval, and recalls such poems as Dunbar's *Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins*. Viola's 'Patience on a monument, smiling at grief' is familiar to all, and less remarkable than a late use of the same image in *Pericles* :

yet thou dost look
Like Patience gazing on kings' graves, and smiling
Extremity out of act.

The original of this image excites one's curiosity. Cleopatra's

Patience is sottish, and impatience does
Become a dog that's mad,

and, in *As You Like It*,

Patience herself would startle at this letter
And play the swaggerer,

although highly characteristic of their author, as we shall see in a moment, are of a different order. More akin is Othello's

Turn thy complexion there,
Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin.

In the same play the description of jealousy,

It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock
The meat it feeds on,

might be paired with Lear's

Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,
More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child
Than the sea-monster.

Then in the following quotations selected from many different plays we find usages of abstract words of every shade and gradation between personification and metaphor.

For now sits Expectation in the air,
And hides a sword from hilts unto the point
With crowns imperial, crowns and coronets. (*Henry V.*)

Now expectation, tickling skittish spirits,
On one and other side, Trojan and Greek,
Sets all on hazard. (*Troilus and Cressida.*)

To't, Luxury, pell-mell! For I lack soldiers.
(*King Lear.*)

What a fool Honesty is! and Truth, his sworn brother,
a very simple gentleman! (*Winter's Tale.*)

When valour preys on reason
It eats the sword it fights with. (*Antony and Cleopatra.*)

For emulation hath a thousand sons
That one by one pursue: if you give way,
Or hedge aside from the direct forthright,
Like to an enter'd tide, they all rush by
And leave you hindmost. (*Troilus and Cressida.*)

Now old desire doth in his deathbed lie,
And young affection gapes to be his heir.

(*Romeo and Juliet.*)

famine is in thy cheeks,
Need and oppression starveth in thine eyes,
Contempt and beggary hangs upon thy neck. (*Ibid.*)

Has friendship such a faint and milky heart,
It turns in less than two nights? (*Timon.*)

vast confusion waits,
As doth a raven on a sickfall'n beast,
The imminent decay of wrested pomp. (*King John.*)

I have seen corruption boil and bubble
Till it o'errun the stew. (*Measure for Measure.*)

In these passages and in such phrases as 'his injury the gaoler to his pity',¹ 'distribution should undo excess',² 'prosperity be thy page',³ 'tongue-tied ambition',⁴ 'thou core of envy',⁵ 'by treason's tooth bare-gnawn and cankerbit',⁶ 'the voice of occupation, and the breath of garlic-eaters',⁷ we recognize and admire Shakespeare's individual skill and unlimited variety in the handling of abstractions. Prospero calls Ariel 'my diligence' and Caliban 'malice'; Polixenes calls Perdita 'enchantment'; Juliet, her nurse, 'ancient damnation'; Prince Hal, the crown, 'polish'd perturbation, golden care'. Against these we can set in contrast Lear's 'detested kite' to Goneril, Prospero's 'poor worm' to Miranda, Hermia's 'painted maypole' to Helena.

'Go to the ant, thou Sluggard, and be wise.' That perhaps is the moral of my suggestions and quotations. In other words, let the poet go to natural objects; they will enable him to compete with the philosopher. A Shakespeare will, with Wordsworth,

Behold, within the leafy shade,
Those bright blue eggs together laid!

¹ *Coriolanus.*

² *K. L.*

³ *Coriolanus.*

⁴ *R. III*

⁵ *T. and C.*

⁶ *K. L.*

⁷ *Coriolanus.*

before discussing with Johnson 'the fancied supplications of humbled enmity' or 'the gentle sentiments of benevolence and peace'. An examination of Shakespeare's varied and innumerable combinations of abstract and concrete will serve to illuminate the truth of Voltaire's tribute, that 'no nation has treated in poetry moral ideas with more energy and depth than the English nation'.

GEORGE RYLANDS.

CONJECTURAL HISTORY
OR
SHAKESPEARE'S *HENRY VIII*

I

IN the third chapter of *Lombard Street*, Walter Bagehot, before explaining how the money-market came to exist, warns his readers against what is too often mistaken for genuine historical inquiry :

In the last century a favourite subject of literary ingenuity was 'conjectural history', as it was then called. Upon grounds of probability a factitious sketch was made of the possible origin of things existing.

But, hypothetical history, which explains the past by what is simplest and commonest in the present, is in banking, as in most things, quite untrue. The real history is very different.

What Bagehot has said of the study of banking is also true of another subject that first became a favourite with literary ingenuity in the eighteenth century: the real history of Shakespeare's life and work is very different from that put together by conjecture.

Shakespeare's early editors, not to be mentioned without gratitude for their labours and ingenuity, had unfortunately, for all their inspiration and learned pains, to rely too much on conjecture ; and conjecture opens the way for the strangest errors. Whether it be that men fear to believe about their favourite poet what may prove too good to be true, or that eminence begets some form of envy in less generous minds, or whether it is merely, as Johnson suggested, that those who are able to add nothing to truth hope for eminence from the heresies of paradox, the innocent but erroneous conjectures of the early editors have all been turned to Shakespeare's detraction. Everything is interpreted in the worst sense, till at last Shakespeare has been represented as an ignorant and boorish yokel from the provinces, who could not have written

a line of the plays that Bacon so mysteriously passed off under his name. And if the story of his life is sometimes thus strangely distorted, the common account given of his works is equally disconcerting. One of the most influential among modern critics and men of letters reviewing recently a new reprint of the First Folio has written :

If this Press wants to print an edition of Shakespeare, and Shakespeare alone, let it set up a committee of experts and persons with good ears to select the works of Shakespeare from 'Shakespeare's works' and give everybody a shock.

It is not too much to say that this is at present the orthodox opinion¹ about what are called Shakespeare's plays. The connexion, however, between this position and the conjectures of the early editors can be very easily discovered, for the work of Professor Pollard and Dr. Smart has made it possible to observe the growth of the guesses of the eighteenth century from their modest and likely beginnings into the strange doctrines that Bacon wrote Shakespeare or that only a committee of experts and persons with good ears can direct us to Shakespeare's authentic works.

Before turning to the guesses of the eighteenth-century editors it may be well to look nearer home to see how a harmless and reasonable conjecture may tempt even the most acute and sympathetic critic to take an unfair advantage of his author. The late Sir Walter Raleigh was a scholar of infinite jest and most excellent fancy, and his essays on Dr. Johnson are by common consent among the happiest of his critical efforts ; but Raleigh, although he shows how insubstantial are the materializations many have tried to pass off on us as the real Dr. Johnson, does not quite escape the temptation of exhibiting his hero as something of a character :

One of the chief fascinations of Johnson's notes on Shakespeare is that they introduce us to not a few of his private heretical opinions, and record some of his most casual remini-

¹ Professor Lascelles Abercrombie, however, in his recent Academy lecture on Shakespeare anticipates a change of outlook, and *The Times* reviewer thinks his lecture may mark a turning-point in opinion.

sciences. We are enabled to trace his reading in the *Life of Sir Thomas More*, and in Sir Walter Raleigh's political remains, and in the fashionable guide to conversation translated from the French of Scudéry. We learn some things which Boswell does not tell us; some even (if a bold thought may be indulged) which Boswell did not know. We are introduced in the *Life* to Johnson's cat Hodge, for whom Johnson used to go out and buy oysters, lest the servants having that trouble should take a dislike to the poor creature. But we are not told what is proved by a note on *Cymbeline* that Johnson passionately protested against physiological experiments on live animals. Again it is not certain that Boswell, if he had known it, would have told us that his hero wore his boots indifferently, either on either foot, and further, what is yet a stranger thing, believed that all other boot-wearers practise the same impartiality. Boswell can hardly have known this; yet Johnson's note on the tailor in *King John*, who, in his haste, falsely thrusts his slippers upon contrary feet, leaves no room for doubt. 'Shakespear', says Johnson, 'seems to have confounded a man's shoes with his gloves. He that is frightened or hurried may put his hand into the wrong glove, but either shoe will equally admit either foot. The author seems to be disturbed by the disorder which he describes.' This is a topic which demands, and would well repay, the expert labours of academic research. Very little is known about Johnson's boots.

The courageous and humane Johnson, sitting down to take his ease before the fire while Hodge, the cat, smelling oysters, rubs himself against the slippers his master wore indifferently on either foot, is a subject very much after Raleigh's heart, and his picture lacks neither truth nor humour. But in attempting to suggest how in grain were Johnson's eccentricities Raleigh asks us to observe the Doctor turning from his domestic ease to annotate Shakespeare in the fond delusion that other boot-wearers practised the same impartiality towards their slippers, and failing through this singularity to understand a point plain to every one but himself. Raleigh's illustration, however, points more forcibly than he intended it should the moral of the scholar's need of information, even at times about his author's boots. Theobald, like Johnson, was troubled with the lines,

Standing on slippers which his nimble haste
Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet,

and wrote to Warburton, 'I could easily account for this in a Greek author, but do not know of anything of a modern fashion with us of having shoes or slippers particular for one foot and not for the other'.¹ But Theobald's historic sense was shown here as on other occasions: he refrained from tampering with the passage and saved himself from the trap that was to catch first Johnson and then Raleigh, though they approached it from different directions. Raleigh did not know that Johnson shared with Theobald and his contemporaries this happy convenience of wearing his shoes without reproach on either foot, any more than Johnson knew that the Elizabethan fashion in shoes was, contrary to that of his own time, for a right and a left in each pair. There could be no plainer example of the dangers of hypothetical history which explains the past by what is simplest and commonest in the present: Johnson was ready to believe that Shakespeare was often confused and careless, and Raleigh that Johnson was something of an eccentric; and both found a ready explanation in the character they gave their author of what they did not understand in the fashions of another age.

The more unbalanced the critic the more extreme the interpretation he places upon such conjectures, so that we pass imperceptibly from the sallies of Johnson and Raleigh to the follies of those biographers who conclude, because there was a muck-heap outside Shakespeare's house in Henley Street and there are none outside our doors, that Stratford must have been too uncivilized to produce a great poet. They talk as if every town and village in Elizabethan England except Stratford had a modern drainage-system, forgetting that when the Londoners cleaned out Moorditch from time to time the annoyance to the citizens was most grievous, however much good matter for jest such an ill wind may have blown the topical writers. Yet no one claims that the insanitary conditions of London damped the poetic fire of her poets, and there is no sense in arguing in such a manner

¹ *The First Editors of Shakespeare*, by T. R. Lounsbury, p. 500.

about Stratford. From such premisses it might indeed be possible to draw an opposite conclusion, and to argue that since the Elizabethans were a poetical generation and we (though there are still good poets alive) are not, insanitary conditions may actually help to induce or maintain the divine afflatus. Modern historical research has of course made such guessing inexcusable to-day, but Shakespeare's early editors lived at a time when the current of conjecture ran of necessity so strongly that even the best are often carried away into absurdities. That scholars to-day need not suffer as often as their predecessors the immersion of their better judgement is of course no proof of superior critical powers; it indicates rather that Rowe and his fellows have helped to provide a footing where there was little or none before. What follows, therefore, is not a criticism of the capacity of the early editors, but an attempt to understand their difficulties and profit by their mistakes.

II

The first published *Life of Shakespeare* was written in the reign of Queen Anne by the dramatist Nicholas Rowe. Although nearly a hundred years had elapsed since Shakespeare's death, historians and scholars had as yet made no search for the documents concerning his affairs, such as his will and his application to the Heralds' College for a grant of arms, that were to be turned to use by later biographers. Rowe had to be content with the few stories he heard in conversation about the poet and with the information which his friend Betterton the actor obtained at Stratford from a hasty examination of the Parish Register and from local gossip. Nor had Rowe any historical knowledge of the Elizabethan age that would have enabled him to interpret the few facts about Shakespeare which he did know. He could only guess at their significance, and the prejudices of his own age strangely distort his picture of Shakespeare. Rowe saw, from his study of the plays, that Shakespeare generally ignored the unities of time and place, but these seemed so important to the

critics of Rowe's generation that he could only attribute Shakespeare's neglect of these points to ignorance and lack of education. 'We are', Rowe says in his *Life*, 'to consider him as a man that lived in a state of almost universal licence and ignorance', and Shakespeare is then represented as without education, writing his plays by the 'mere light of nature'. Had Rowe noted that Shakespeare's contemporaries, Marlowe and Greene, also ignore the unities and that they were both Cambridge graduates with some Latin and Greek, he would not have hazarded so ill-considered a guess.

Though there are many plain and indisputable facts that contradict Rowe's idea of the conditions attending Shakespeare's upbringing, a number of points difficult to explain without minute historical knowledge seemed to confirm it. And it has been argued that the evidence of his father's illiteracy and the circumstances surrounding his own marriage go to confirm Rowe's opinion of his early fortunes.

But the evidence that John Shakespeare was illiterate is far from conclusive. It is true that in the minutes of the Stratford Council he regularly put a cross against his name. The clerk first wrote out the names of the council, and those who attended signed or made a mark against their own names. While, however, it might seem a safe deduction that those who made a mark were unable to write, as they would be to-day, this is not true of an earlier period. A man might make his mark in those times though he could write well enough, and even in the Stratford minutes there is found a mark by Adrian Quiney, some of whose letters, written in his own hand, are still in existence. And those who argue that John Shakespeare was illiterate have to explain why the annual account presented in 1566 is headed: *The account of William Tylor and William Smith, Chamberlains, made by John Shakespeare*. How John Shakespeare could have kept a public account running to eighty entries, giving and accepting receipts, if he had been unable to write, or why he should have been selected to perform the Chamberlain's duties, his own term of office being over, unless he had some special readiness in accounting, it is difficult to conjecture. Those

who take John Shakespeare's illiteracy as proved merely argue from the customs of to-day to those of 300 years ago, and in signatures as in slippers, fashions are liable to change.

Marriage customs have also changed. Men and women in England at that time could marry without church or priest or documentary record of any kind, merely by declaring their purpose in the presence of witnesses. Such a marriage is still valid in Scotland and was then recognized in England by Church and State. There was no question of the respectability of the contracting parties, though it was customary but not necessary to follow their marriage at a convenient season by a church ceremony. Those, therefore, who argue that the circumstances under which Shakespeare married Ann Hathaway are discreditable to them both are merely confusing law and custom as they stand to-day with what obtained in 1583. The minute investigations of modern scholars have shown that there is no particle of evidence for any such imputation.¹ Here as elsewhere the late Sir Sidney Lee gave in to the infirmity which made him so often put the worst construction on Shakespeare's actions, and what had been made clear and orderly he would have reduced to confusion once more by misrepresenting the facts. In this as in many other points the American scholar, Professor Quincy Adams, restores the true and fair interpretation, but even Professor Adams, though his scholarly pains and fair-minded temper everywhere command respect, still seems to slip back at times into the old established trick of regarding the Elizabethans as the inferiors in native wit and civility of the men of these enlightened times. Here is his picture of Stratford :

At this time Stratford was a small and very quiet country town lying open to the fields, without turreted walls, or monasteries, or moated castles. It was peopled not with noble families, but with simple honest folk, who plied their trades, and rarely bothered their heads with matters that lay beyond their horizon. For the most part they were unable to read or write ; yet they

¹ *Shakespeare's Marriage*, by J. W. Gray. See also *Shakespeare Truth and Tradition*, pp. 77 sqq.

possessed native shrewdness, and exhibited, no doubt, strongly-marked personalities, including such types as Dogberry, Sly, and Bottom the weaver. Butchers, haberdashers, grocers, woollen-drappers, glovers were elected to posts of the highest honor in the civic government, and constituted the aristocracy of the village. The streets were narrow and winding, and, as the records show, often polluted with trash and standing pools of water. The houses were crazy affairs; built of stucco with timber beams showing, and covered with thatched roofs. The old Clopton Bridge of solid masonry with its fourteen arches, the pretentious village church with its high steeple of wood, and the fine old Guild Chapel with its curious frescoes, were objects of special pride to the citizens.¹

But most of these observations might be transferred to many a famous city to-day, where butchers, haberdashers, grocers, woollen-drappers, glovers, are elected to posts of the highest honour in the civic government and constitute the aristocracy of the town. Then as now these occupations were often pursued by men of energy and enlightenment, and Mr. Fripp's recent portrait of Shakespeare's friend Richard Quyny reveals the attractive personality of a mercer and bailiff of Shakespeare's Stratford. And many would be glad still to have the architectural tradition that flowered in the Stratford parish church and guild chapel; nor does the average example of domestic architecture to-day compare favourably in building and craftsmanship with the half-timbered houses of Stratford. Fortunately modern housing schemes, at least on this side of the Atlantic, are not likely to stand as evidence against us before the literary historian of 2300 A.D. It is impossible to suppose that the monuments that still remain in Stratford of the industry and taste of an older age were erected by a generation whose most strongly-marked personalities resembled Dogberry, Sly, and Bottom the weaver. Professor Quincy Adams has not emphasized here sufficiently the other aspect of rural England which inspired very different thoughts in the mind of the poet Gray:

¹ *A Life of William Shakespeare*, by Joseph Quincy Adams, p. 35.

Some village Hampden that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

To translate Gray into the terms employed by Professor Quincy Adams we should have to talk of Stratford not as the home of Dogberry, Sly, and Bottom the weaver, but of some village Hamlet or blameless Othello. In Shakespeare himself was some of the Hampden blood, for the Ardens were allied by marriage to the family of the great statesman and patriot and Mary Arden was Shakespeare's mother; and round him were yeoman and gentle families bearing the names of Clopton, Underhill, Trussell, Woodward, Nash, Reynolds, Combe, Lane, and Kempton, families of reputation and married into other families not unnamed in the annals of England.

It is not often that Professor Quincy Adams echoes, however faintly, the old cries; and any one who compares his account of Shakespeare and his times with that given by Rowe can see how much of the past has been recovered by the painful labours of antiquaries and historians, and how different it is from that raised by conjecture. Nothing could be further from the universal licence and ignorance imagined by Rowe than the Stratford into which Shakespeare was born.

III

The view that Shakespeare's schooling was so incomplete 'that he had no knowledge of the writings of the antient poets' persisted during the eighteenth century, and, when further examination revealed a greater familiarity with Latin authors, Rowe's theory was not set aside but supported with subsidiary conjectures. Farmer maintained that any passages containing evidence of schooling in the plays attributed to Shakespeare by his first editors might be considered the work of another hand. For, like those who would set up a committee of experts and persons with good ears to select the works of Shakespeare, he had no respect for the

authority of Heminge and Condell. A hasty survey of the blunders into which those who pursued this line of conjecture have fallen may warn any who still feel tempted to venture on it of their imminent danger of committing some serious folly. Besides, their whole argument starts from an untenable conjecture.

Shakespeare's second editor was Pope. To-day Pope is not regarded as one of our very greatest poets, but he would be a bold critic who would assert that he had a finer ear than the author of *The Rape of the Lock*, or the man who wrote, as Ker has reminded us :

Where e'er you walk cool gales shall fan the glade.

Yet any one at the present time who permitted himself to correct Shakespeare's versification in the way Pope did not hesitate to do in his edition would be written down as too insensible to the harmony of Elizabethan poetry to be taken seriously as a critic. The ear is no absolute judge freed from the prejudices of time and place, and it is as easy to be deaf to Shakespeare's poetical habits as to be ignorant about his boots.

As Rowe, Shakespeare's first eighteenth-century editor, opened the channel for the tradition of Shakespeare's want of learning, so his second editor is the fountain-head of that criticism of the text by which Farmer maintained Rowe's position and ignored the authority of the first editors. A generation that regarded Shakespeare 'as without the advantage of education', and as a man almost as unhappy in his deficiencies as he was fortunate in his combination of talents, naturally regarded his fellows and first editors as 'mere players' too sunk in ignorance to be taken seriously as editors. Pope's unfavourable verdict was long accepted with approval by his successors, and Warburton's extraordinary statement that Shakespeare's works were left to 'the Care of Door-keepers and Prompters', and 'long neglected amongst the lumber of the stage' is not uncharacteristic of the time. That the actors had ill-treated Shakespeare's text Pope and his contemporaries had no doubt at all. He saw

that many of the plays were printed or transcribed from the prompter's copy, for in the printed copies the names of actors are sometimes substituted for the characters they play and technical stage directions are numerous. And he argued from Hamlet's reproof of the clowns 'that speak more than is set down for them', interrupting with their untimely jests the necessary business on the stage, that the actors were guilty of interpolation. This passage, however, proves that Shakespeare disliked the practice and that his company were on his side. What he would not have on the stage he would hardly tolerate in the text. But Pope's finding became the orthodox view, and Theobald talks of the first editors' printing from parts 'which had gone through as many changes as Performers'; and Dr. Johnson finally set the seal of his authority on it in his now notorious statement:

It is not easy for invention to bring together so many causes concurring to vitiate a text as are found in the history of Shakespeare's plays.

But Pope was not content to blame the actors for providing a badly mutilated text; he was also certain they had included in their collection several works not by Shakespeare; and he considered that many of the plays in the First Folio had no more right there than the seven extra plays that were added in the Third Folio of 1664.

On turning to examine the authority on which Pope relied for these statements one is not reassured. It is clear he was faced with a text containing many obsolete words, or words surviving in unliterary dialects, many technical terms and unfamiliar idioms. We also know that he had to deal with a style of composition and verse whose refinements and variety were quite beyond his conception. He had in addition to handle a system of spelling and punctuation unfamiliar and puzzling, and this, since it was different from what was used in his own time, he readily regarded as the product of illiteracy. Lacking the necessary historical knowledge—a knowledge still far from complete—his ear on which he relied to distinguish the genuine from the spurious played him many sorry tricks. A few instances must suffice.

In the familiar lines from Othello's history :

Wherein of antres vast and desarts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks and hills whose heads touch heaven
It was my hint to speak.

Pope altered 'desarts idle' to 'desarts wild', and in the same play Othello's sword described as of 'the ice brook's temper' becomes of the 'Ebro's temper' because the best Spanish blades were made on the banks of that river. Pope's numerous corrections of the metre must be passed over. His rejection of interpolations, however, deserves consideration. 'Some suspected passages', he says, 'which are excessively bad are degraded to the bottom of the page.' Among these degraded passages stand many that seem to the modern ear not only beautiful, but eminently characteristic of Shakespeare's genius. In *Romeo and Juliet* old Capulet's fond description of his daughter,

She is the hopeful lady of my earth

did not satisfy Pope's ear, nor could he retain in the text the line from *Macbeth*,

Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care.

In *Macbeth*, perhaps, he does his worst on Shakespeare. If ever there was a Shakespearian passage, overwhelming both as poetry and as a dramatic utterance, it is the prophetic words of the remorseful Macbeth :

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

But this would not pass with Pope, who, detecting an interpolation by the actors, placed at the bottom of the page the line,

The multitudinous seas incarnadine,

restoring in the play as Shakespeare's original words,

No, this my hand will rather

Make the green ocean red.

It seems a pity that editors like Heminge and Condell, who

could interpolate such a line as 'the multitudinous seas incarnadine', should not have had the editing of more of the English poets.

In *Macbeth* Pope also ventures on larger excisions: the Porter-scene in its entirety he rejects from the text. It was for his verdict on this scene that a later and far more generously gifted critic than Pope was corrected by Raleigh. Coleridge thought like Pope that this scene could not be by Shakespeare, but he ventured to make a reservation that exposed him to a not unjust retort. Referring to Coleridge Raleigh says:

The same great critic asserts that 'the low soliloquy of the Porter' in *Macbeth* was 'written for the mob by some other hand, perhaps with Shakespeare's consent', and that 'finding it take, he with the remaining ink of a pen otherwise employed, just interpolated the words—"I'll devil-porter it no further: I had thought to have let in some of all professions that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire". Of the rest not one syllable has the ever-present being of Shakespeare.' That is to say Coleridge does not like the Porter's speech, so he denies it to Shakespeare. But one sentence in it is too good to lose, so Shakespeare must be at hand to write it. This is the very ecstasy of criticism, and sends us back to the cool and manly utterances of Dryden, Johnson, and Pope with a heightened sense of the value of moderation and candour.

But it is far from clear that Coleridge in ascribing a phrase in the Porter-scene to Shakespeare is less cool and manly than Pope when he asserts that Heminge or Condell or one of the actors picked up a pen and inserted 'The multitudinous seas incarnadine', or composed the Porter-scene as a whole. Rowe and Pope and Johnson are each in his own way as far from moderation and sense as Coleridge and further; and Coleridge's real fault is that he was betrayed by the tradition of the eighteenth century into denying to Shakespeare a dramatic stroke of the greatest genius. In attempting to recover from this gross blunder he exposes, as Raleigh points out, the whole absurdity of this impressionistic criticism.

Since the time of Rowe there has been a band of scholars and critics working on Shakespeare as laborious in study

and as gifted in poetic ear as any company that could be brought together to-day; yet their attempt to select the works of Shakespeare from Shakespeare's works has been completely unconvincing and too often laughable in its futility. When two such gifted poets as Pope and Coleridge can stray so far as to attribute to some casual scribbler what are now received as amongst the most obvious touches of the highest poetic or dramatic genius, there is obviously no limit to the absurdities others may commit. It is true there are many to-day ready to rush in where it would have been well even for Coleridge and Pope not to tread; but no one with any historic sense will take them seriously. There is now no excuse for this form of conjecture as in the eighteenth century. The whole criticism of the authority of Heminge and Condell as editors, and of the authenticity of their text, started by Pope, and elaborated by his successors, has been completely overthrown. Historical study has shown that in the history of the text, as in the biography of the poet, the truth is the very opposite of what conjecture has imagined.

Modern textual criticism, guided by Professor Pollard, accepts as beyond question the fact from which Pope started: that the Folio text (and this includes the Good Quartos) derived from theatrical papers. But instead of going on to conclude, as Pope did, that the text must therefore be far removed from Shakespeare's original, it actually sees in this peculiarity an inducement to believe that in many instances the printing may have been done from a manuscript in Shakespeare's own hand. In the *Address to the Great Variety of Readers*, Heminge and Condell say of their author:

His mind and hand went together: And what he thought, he uttered with that easinesse, that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers.

But they were not making this public merely as a piece of interesting information: they were justifying their previous claim to be in a position to print a genuine text by revealing the ground of their confidence—the good condition of their author's manuscripts. These they had received from Shakespeare in the course of the Company's business, for they

were the Company's managers. As Professor Pollard has pointed out, an author's manuscript might very well be sent to the Master of the Revels for his allowance, and the allowed book might then be used by the Prompter. And modern critics now frequently explain the irregularities that so worried the eighteenth-century editors by framing a similar history for Shakespeare's manuscript. Professor Dover Wilson, in his Introduction to a Facsimile text of *Antony and Cleopatra*, says :

The very roughness of the text before us is a guarantee of its authenticity.

And so far are some from believing in the numerous transcripts which Johnson thought must intervene between the original and the printed copy that they hope to reconstruct not only Shakespeare's spelling but his punctuation. Though such claims cannot yet be accepted, no one can question the validity of the evidence for the complete reversal of the judgement passed on the first editors by Pope. Those, therefore, who realize the danger of trusting to their ear to determine for them what is indeed by Shakespeare need not feel they are now without a sound resource, as the evidence on this point of Heminge and Condell is still available.

IV

But modern criticism, it may be objected, has formulated tests whereby the findings of the ear can be corrected or confirmed. Differences in the spelling of proper names, irregular numbering of acts and scenes, variations in certain characteristics of the verse, and other features that can be clearly tabulated, are thought to have enabled critics to make their opinions safe against the objections so fatal to purely subjective judgements. While, however, the existence of these facts is not disputed in any way, what is not so clear is their relation to the theories they are supposed to substantiate ; and it will generally be found that some hasty and improbable conjecture has become attached to a set of

facts much as the hermit crab creeps into a shell not its own merely for protection. The two do not grow together, but are united as opportunity permits.

Both Farmer and Malone did much towards providing logical armour for the naked surmise of their predecessors: Rowe's theory of Shakespeare's ignorance was thought to be placed beyond the reach of criticism by Farmer's *Essay*, and Malone hid away in the convolutions of his *Dissertation*, on the relation of *The Contention* and its sequel to 2 and 3 *Henry VI*, Theobald's guess that Shakespeare was only in part the author of these latter plays. Among later Shakespeareans Fleay was unwearied in covering with a display of irrelevant fact the weakest hypotheses. There is no doubt he delighted in the virtuosity with which he made the worse appear the better reason; for when challenged by Bullen he begged not to be taken too seriously. Next, however, to Malone's *Dissertation on Henry VI*, as a piece of objective criticism designed to make good the presence of other hands in a play assigned to Shakespeare, stands Spedding's essay *On the Several Shares of Shakespeare and Fletcher in the Play of Henry VIII*. As this latter piece of criticism is still generally considered to provide a safe retreat for the opinion that maintains itself there, it may now be examined in passing to illustrate how facts can be manipulated to accommodate conjecture.

For *Henry VIII*, as for *Henry VI*, the first to provide a positive basis for the assumption that only in part could it be Shakespeare's was Malone; and to do so he joined two independent lines of inquiry. Theobald, under the impression that the play was written before the death of Elizabeth, pointed to the praise of James¹ as a later insertion obviously written after James's accession. Johnson agreed, and went on to doubt whether Shakespeare wrote the Prologue and Epilogue: there is so much of *fool and fight* in his plays that he questioned whether he would have animadverted so severely on himself and added:

¹ Act v, sc. v, ll. 40-56. References are to Craig's Oxford text.

It appears to me very likely that they were supplied by the friendship or officiousness of Jonson, whose manner they will be perhaps found exactly to resemble.¹

But he made no serious effort to establish this resemblance, and when Steevens quoted the lines from Jonson's Prologue to *Every Man in his Humour* about York and Lancaster's long jars he probably pointed to all that Johnson had particularly in mind.

As the Prologue was clearly designed to introduce an untried piece to 'the first and happiest hearers of the town', it must have been written not later than June 1613, when the play was performed at the Globe. Heminge and Condell and Burbage were still in charge of the King's men, and it is difficult to know whether it is more unreasonable to suppose that the players would have spoken or printed anything reflecting on the work of their fellow or to imagine that Ben Jonson, had he been invited to contribute a Prologue, would have chosen such an occasion for his criticism. His remarks on Shakespeare's need to blot were reserved for his private conversation with the poet's idolaters and his defence of his part in that conversation recorded in his *Timber*: in the First Folio he chose rather to praise his friend's industry in his art. Only the author himself could have ventured to introduce his play in the terms of this Prologue. And both Prologue and Epilogue have marked resemblances to similar pieces by Shakespeare. In the Epilogue he repeats the old trick, employed at the end of *2 Henry IV* and *As You Like It*, of asking the women in the audience to lead the applause; and the Epilogue to *2 Henry IV* is certainly his. Again for the Prologue there is the companion apology to *Henry V* whose authorship cannot seriously be questioned.² There his audience were 'gentles all' and were asked 'gently to hear'; now they are 'gentle hearers'. On the earlier occasion he asks:

Think when we talk of horses that you see them
Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth.

¹ Boswell's *Malone*, xix. 499.

² Mr. Robertson, however, attributes it to Dekker or some other hand.

Now he says:

Think ye see
The very persons of our noble story
As they were living,

which recalls the desire to show 'the war-like Harry like himself'. Mr. Granville Barker has observed that in the Prologue to *Henry V* there is more than a formal modesty and that it is indeed something of an admission of failure. There is the same note in that to *Henry VIII*.

But Dr. Johnson's suggestion, though indefensible, was well received by Farmer, at any rate, who went one better and fancied he detected the hand of Jonson in the body of the play; and the Doctor's dictum that in the play itself 'the genius of Shakespeare comes in and goes out with Katherine' had not long to wait for a more literal interpretation than he intended. In his inquiry into the chronological order of the plays Malone built on these conjectures. He dates the play before 1603, for

If *King Henry VIII* had been written in the time of James I, the author, instead of expatiating so largely in the last scene, in praise of the Queen, which he could not think would be acceptable to her successor, who hated her memory, would probably have made him the principal figure in the prophecy, and thrown her into the background as much as possible.¹

There were, therefore, in his opinion, additions such as Theobald detected. But Malone was acquainted with a second and quite independent line of inquiry concerning *Henry VIII*. Roderick, in a contribution² to Edward's *Canons of Criticism*, had pointed out three features which he thought distinguished the verse of *Henry VIII* very clearly from that in any other of Shakespeare's plays: the excessive number of double endings, the frequency of the pause at the end of the seventh syllable, and the interference of the accent indicated by the sense with that suggested by the metre. Malone thought he saw a way of harmonizing Roderick's findings with his own preconceptions borrowed from Theobald and Johnson, and,

¹ Boswell's *Malone*, ii. 390.

² Reprinted in New Shakespeare Society *Transactions*, 1874.

making no further inquiry¹ into the characteristics of the verse of *Henry VIII* as compared with that in other plays in the First Folio, concluded that the panegyric on James was

added in 1613, after Shakespeare had quitted the stage, by that hand which tampered with the other parts of the play so much, as to have rendered the versification of it of a different colour from all the other plays of Shakespeare.²

It would be hard to find a clearer instance of the casual combination of conjecture and fact. A significance becomes attached to Roderick's findings in no way developed from the facts themselves, and the conjecture assumes a credit not by rights its own.

But it may be objected that Malone's guess was at least on the right lines and that it has been justified in part by Spedding, who found that the panegyric on James was not by Shakespeare but by Fletcher, who is now held responsible for the peculiarities that distinguish the verse of *Henry VIII* from other plays in the First Folio. The prophecy over Elizabeth, however, as the verse proves, was by the same hand, and there is now no question here of a later insertion; so that Malone was guided somewhat providentially to any truth he hit upon by an initial assumption which is completely discredited. But although Spedding marked more clearly where the peculiarities of the verse of *Henry VIII* lay, he, like Malone, assumed that these differences could only have one explanation. This is the assumption that still requires proof.

Working on a suggestion made to him by Tennyson that the verse of *Henry VIII* was in places like that of Fletcher, Spedding applied a test borrowed from Hickson,³ and showed

¹ Boswell's *Malone*, ii. 401.

² Boswell's *Malone*, xix. 496.

³ New Shakespeare Society *Transactions*, 1874, p. 21*—'And in respect of this I had myself received additional light, more perhaps than I am aware of, from Mr. Hickson himself.' Much is made of Hickson's reaching the same results in *Henry VIII* as Spedding, but once the test proposed by Hickson was accepted it was merely a matter of counting double endings. It would have been strange had they not succeeded in counting alike.

that in some scenes the lines with double endings are considerably in excess of what is found till this time in Shakespeare's verse, and that Fletcher is the only other dramatist that can be shown to have used them so freely. This peculiarity in the verse of *Henry VIII* had already been indicated by Roderick:

This play has very near *two* redundant verses to *one* in any other play. . . . Only to take Cranmer's last prophetic speech about Queen Elizabeth, and you will find that, in the 49 lines which it consists of, 32 are redundant, and only 17 regular. It would, I believe, be difficult to find any 50 lines together (out of this Play) where there are even so many as 17 redundant.¹

Roderick, however, exaggerated this peculiarity of *Henry VIII*: there are 1,266 double endings in the 2,666 blank verse lines of *Henry VIII*, while *Coriolanus* has 710; and if *Henry VIII* has 47 per cent. of this type of line there is 35 per cent. in *The Tempest*.² Nor is it difficult to find 17 redundant verses in 50 lines in the later plays: the closing scene of *The Winter's Tale* has 21 in the first 50 lines, and there are 17 in the 27 lines of an episode in *The Tempest*, III. iii. 83-109, or 1 in 1.6 lines against the 1 in 1.5 of Cranmer's speech. The mere number of double endings therefore in *Henry VIII* would not entitle Spedding to conclude that Shakespeare's verse could not have developed in this way. But he went on to show that they are arranged within the play so that it may be divided in two on a purely numerical basis: scenes where the proportion of double endings varies from 1 in 2 to 1 in 1.5, and those where it lies between 1 in 2.5 and 1 in 3.5.

Nor is this division an arbitrary one. Spedding also pointed to a difference in the proportion of run-on lines in the two parts, these varying inversely with the double endings. And Ingram in his very thorough examination of the weak and light endings in Shakespeare was able to show that in this feature also there was a very marked difference between the divisions in *Henry VIII*—that assigned to

¹ *Transactions*, 1874, p. 67*.

² The figures are from Sir Edmund Chambers' new tables.

Fletcher having only 7 light and 1 weak against 45 light and 37 weak endings in the other part. There is, however, a connexion between these various features in the verse. That a large increase in double endings would make the verse more end-stopped is what might be expected, and Bathurst observes:

Milton carefully avoids 'double endings in general; but they suit better with plays. The verses of plays are *sermoni propria*, and, being cut into speeches, do not require or admit that sustained flow which Milton cultivates, and which the double ending seems to interrupt.¹

Again the same critic notes that

The double endings are not likely to go with the very weak endings, because weak particles are almost always monosyllables.¹

Up to a certain point of course both weak endings and run-on lines may be found increasing with double endings; but it is also clear that a point must be reached when the others will fall away before the double endings, as a play with a double ending to every line could have no light or weak endings and would be largely end-stopped. The other differences, therefore, in 'Fletcher's' part of *Henry VIII* are related to the large increase in the double endings.

So far the division rests on a purely numerical basis. It has been asserted, however, though not by Spedding, that there is as well as this difference in the *degree* to which the two styles in *Henry VIII* employ double endings, run-on lines, light and weak endings, a difference in the *kind* of line they use. Hickson² held that Shakespeare *never pauses upon a superabundant syllable*. Boyle,³ adopting this view, says of the line

Go give 'em welcome, you can speak the French | tongue.

'We have already noticed this extra accented syllable (tongue) at the end as an *exclusively* Fletcherian peculiarity.' For this

¹ *Shakespeare's Versification*, 1857, p. 148.

² *Transactions*, 1874, p. 35*.

³ *Transactions*, 1880-6, pp. 453, 455.

reason he declares that such lines as these in 'Buckingham's Farewell',

Ever beloved and loving must his rule | be
Nor build their evils on the graves of great | men,

can only belong to Fletcher. Again, as Professor Nichol Smith¹ has noted,

Dr. Abbot says emphatically that 'the fact that in *Henry VIII*, and in no other play of Shakespeare's, constant exceptions are found to this rule (that the extra syllable is rarely a monosyllable) seems to me sufficient proof that Shakespeare did not write that play'.

And Abbot² also considered the lines in *Henry VIII* from which one can remove an unemphatic monosyllable and leave a sort of trochaic line, e.g.,

Say | Wolsey that once trod the ways of glory.
Found | thee a way, out of his wreck to rise in.³

quite unlike Shakespeare's. But these attempts to prove that the kind of verse employed in 'Fletcher's' part is not Shakespeare's break down under two considerations.

An examination of the verse in other plays in the First Folio shows that these characteristics, claimed as *peculiar* to Fletcher, are also found quite frequently in Shakespeare. The following twelve examples, selected from many others in *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*, of what have been considered 'exclusively Fletcherian' features are sufficient to disprove the hasty assertions of Hickson, Boyle, and Abbot:

- (1) 'Twould put me to my slipper ; but I feel | not
This deity in my bosom : twenty consciences,
- (2) That stand 'twixt me and Milan, candied be | they,
And melt ere they molest ! Here lies your brother. . . .
- (3) Whom I with this obedient steel,—three inch | es of it,—
The Tempest, II. i. 285–8, 291.
- (4) Follow us to the court. Thou, churl, for this | time,

¹ *Henry VIII* (The Warwick Shakespeare), p. xxiii.

² *Transactions*, 1874, p. 75.

³ Abbot quotes both these lines.

- (5) Though full of our displeasure, yet we free | thee
 From the dead blow of it. And you enchantment
The Winter's Tale, iv. iii. 445-7.
- (6) Upon thy tongue as in my thought. Now, good, | now. . .
 Would have him wed again.
 If you would not | so
 You pity not the state, nor the remembrance. . .
- (7) Yet, if my lord will marry,—if you will, | sir. . .
- (8) Has these poor men in question. Never saw | I. . .
The Winter's Tale, v. i. 19, 24-5, 76, 198.
- (9) The very thought of my revenges that | way
 Recoil upon me: in himself too mighty
- (10) And in his parties, his alliance; let | him be. . .
The Winter's Tale, ii. iii. 19-21.
Leon. One seven-night longer.
Pol. Very sooth, to-morrow.
- (11) *Leon.* I'll no gainsaying.
Pol. Press me not, beseech | you, so.
 There is no tongue that moves, none, none i' the world
- (12) So soon as yours could win me: so it should | now.
The Winter's Tale, i. ii. 17, 19-21.

In every instance the extra syllable is a monosyllable (or if there are two extra syllables two monosyllables), and on this syllable there is frequently a pause. What Boyle called the extra accented syllable is, therefore, not unknown in Shakespeare's work. Again, from several of the lines here quoted (e.g. the five lines from *The Tempest*) the initial syllable can be removed to produce the effect commented on by Abbot. The caesura after the seventh syllable, selected by Roderick as a feature of the verse in *Henry VIII*, may also be seen in these examples, but it is of course very common, as Bathurst¹ noted in plays of the Fourth Period.

But not only are all these features of the verse so confidently pointed to as decisive evidence of Fletcher's style frequently found in Shakespeare, they are also found in those parts of *Henry VIII* assigned to Shakespeare (or, according to Boyle, to Massinger). If Fletcher alone wrote

¹ *Shakespeare's Versification*, p. 135.

verse containing an extra accented syllable, as Hickson contended, then, as Boyle saw, Fletcher inserted many single lines in the part written by his collaborator, nor did Boyle hesitate to ascribe these lines to Fletcher:

To those who may think it too much to venture on to assert that particular lines were inserted by Fletcher I can only reply that these lines, so utterly different in their feminine softness from the harmonious swing of the rest of the passage, point irresistibly to the presence of what geologists would call a 'fault'. We may take the word in both significances.¹

The lines in question are double ended with an extra accented syllable, and this is enough to mark them to Boyle as Fletcher's. Spedding's clear dividing line between the collaborators, so persuasive a feature in his argument, is gone. Boyle's conclusion by itself is sufficient to cast doubt on his premises, and it would finally land him in the further absurdity of having to assign many individual lines in *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale*, and other Fourth Period plays to Fletcher. It is Boyle who is here at fault.

The division of the play rests, therefore, on a purely numerical basis. But it is in no way unreasonable to suppose that Shakespeare, since he used the double ending so freely at times in his later plays, may have gone even further in this direction in his last work, especially as a few years before he made a much more unprepared-for change in the detail of his versification. *Antony and Cleopatra* is the earliest play in the full Fourth Period style. Had Shakespeare's work as a dramatist ended at this point the verse of *Antony and Cleopatra* would have had more claim to be described as unique than that of *Henry VIII* now has. It contains on Ingram's reckoning 71 light and 28 weak endings. No earlier play is given more than 2 weak endings, and *Macbeth* comes closest in number of light endings with 21. Without later plays to confirm the change in style there would not have been wanting, one can well believe, many erroneous explanations of this sudden development.

But the question remains, Can a play in which the statistics

¹ *Transactions*, 1880-6, p. 455.

of the verse indicate so marked a variation within the play in the use of double and light endings be ascribed to a single author? Again, one can only appeal to Shakespeare's practice elsewhere. *Antony and Cleopatra*, in which light and weak endings first became prominent, shows considerable variation in their employment from scene to scene. Act v, sc. i, has 1 in 77 lines, while v. ii, which is nearly five times as long with 369 lines, has 17 times as many, and III. ix, only three lines short of v. i, has 8 such endings. From the earliest times there is marked variation in the use of double endings. Though *2 Henry IV* must have been written within a few months of *1 Henry IV*, the former has 16 per cent. of double endings against 5 per cent. in the latter. Within single plays there are more marked differences. Mr. Robertson,¹ discussing the double endings in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, observes:

In the opening section they amount to 7 per cent. ; in the second scene they mount to 16 per cent. ; and in Act II. iv they rise to 25.

In *The Comedy of Errors* he notes :

In the first (scene) we have three double endings to 153 lines of blank verse—2 per cent. ; in the second scene the percentage at once leaps to 24.

And with the variations in double endings goes a difference in the number of run-on lines. It is indeed in this combination of variations that Mr. Robertson finds the great opportunity for the exercise of his critical powers. And here is the chief source of his evidence that Marlowe 'originated' *The Comedy of Errors*, or wrote Clarence's dream, or that Antony's oration over Caesar is not by Shakespeare, or that the description of Cleopatra on the Cydnus may well be by Fletcher.² Mr. Robertson, it is true, finds those to whom

¹ *The Shakespeare Canon*, Part II, pp. 11 and 129.

² This last suggestion Mr. Robertson owes to a friend, Mr. Marley Denwood, and as he 'cannot profess to rebut' it, he asks that it should be considered, though inclining himself, it would seem, to the view that Chapman wrote the speech. See *Times Literary Supplement*, 26 June, 1930.

such views are unacceptable devoid of aesthetic interest and judgement. But as Mr. Robertson would not claim to be the superior of Pope and Coleridge in delicacy of ear, his aesthetic findings have no more standing than those considered on an earlier page. He must rely for purposes of argument on what he calls his 'inductive' method, and here he has made explicit as a principle what is tacitly assumed by Spedding. When Mr. Robertson finds within a work marked variations in those features in the verse which can be tabulated he also inclines to look for another hand. Nowhere has he yet found a division so broad and regular as in *Henry VIII*, but those he works on are of a similar kind; and those who accept Spedding's argument will find it hard to show why they should not also agree with Mr. Robertson.

But a weak-kneed brother, as Furnivall called any who has 'not had the training to enable him to rely on his own judgement as to minute differences of style', who looks for guidance to good tradition may well find a simpler explanation of many of these variations in the detail of the verse. Bathurst speaking of Shakespeare's use of the double ending has observed:

I cannot but perceive that the common form [of blank verse], in some of the best speeches of Shakespeare, where constant, is too cramped, and, as we know that the licence does exist, leads us to wish for it, and sometimes most gratefully to accept a single deviation into it; as, in the soliloquy on Sleep:

And hush'd by buzzing night-flies to his slumber.

The two forms are often mingled by Shakespeare, with very great taste, like most things that he does, being the effect of feeling, and not of rule. And this seems to consist, sometimes, in following the one form in one part of a speech rather continuously, and the other in the other part.¹

If Shakespeare adopts this method within a speech why not within a play? Had *Henry VIII* been written throughout in the manner of Buckingham's farewell the play would have become intolerably monotonous and the set speeches like his, or Wolsey's, or Cranmer's have lost their distinction.

¹ *Shakespeare's Versification*, p. 147.

As the play stands it is hard to see what better resource the dramatist could have employed to secure a satisfactory unity of impression than this variation, which is made the basis of its disintegration.

It is true that the famous speeches in this play are now declared by many critics to be unworthy of Shakespeare, although the feeling of many generations of playgoers and readers has pronounced them the crown of the work. Emerson, who had observed the distinction in the metre, considered that part of the

play was written by a superior, thoughtful man, with a vicious ear. I can mark his lines, and know well their cadence. See Wolsey's Soliloquy, and the following scene with Cromwell, where, instead of the metre of Shakespeare, whose secret is that the thought constructs the tune, so that reading for the sense will best bring out the rhythm; here the lines are constructed on a given tune, and the verse has even a trace of pulpit eloquence. But the play contains, through all its length, unmis-takeable traits of Shakespeare's hand; and some passages, as the account of the coronation, are like autographs. What is odd, the compliment to Queen Elizabeth is in the bad rhythm.¹

But the rhythm which Emerson found so vicious is clearly in process of development in parts of *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. Again, the account of the coronation which seemed to Emerson so clearly by Shakespeare is given by Spedding and Hickson to Fletcher, and must be assigned to him if Spedding's division is to be given even the appearance of consistency. And another view about the quality of the rhythm of Wolsey's speech and the similar passages in the play is commonly entertained. It is true many make their first acquaintance with them in *Speakers* or books of extracts, but this merely shows that the verdict of time has been in their favour; and one of the most experienced and judicious of Shakespeare's critics has declared that the most beautiful piece of speaking he has ever heard was Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson's 'Buckingham's Farewell' in *Henry VIII*. And beautiful speaking is a harmony in which the author

¹ Quoted in *Transactions*, 1874, p. 21*.

must bear his part. If this speech, which is a characteristic example of the rhythm censured by Emerson, were indeed the product of a vicious ear, not even Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson could have won from it Mr. Granville Barker's¹ whole-hearted admiration. Neither the rhythm of these speeches nor the method by which they are contrasted with other parts of the play entitles any one to deny them to Shakespeare.

Spedding's conjecture that *Henry VIII* was largely by Fletcher involved him in assumptions which he made no attempt to prove, and having committed himself to this view he had to go on to further assumptions that are contradicted by the evidence at our disposal. He imagines another occasion for the play than that, mentioned by Wotton and others, at the Globe, when the house was accidentally set on fire and completely destroyed. The Globe production in June 1613, as Wotton noted, 'was set forth with many extraordinary circumstances of Pomp and Majesty . . . sufficient in truth within awhile to make greatness very familiar, if not ridiculous'. This was almost certainly its first performance, for Wotton calls it a 'new' play, and the internal evidence confirms his statement and so does the Prologue. As two years had passed since the last Shakespeare première, and there had been no such interval between his plays for fifteen years and more, it would not be surprising to find that this had been regarded as an important occasion worthy of a special effort by the author as well as the company. The players clearly spared no expense and the play was obviously designed on imposing lines. But Spedding conjectured that it was hastily improvised for the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth, in February 1613, and that Fletcher had to be called in to hasten its completion. There is no record, however, of any such performance among the Lord Treasurer's accounts, which are still preserved.

But Spedding ventured further and was prepared to show how the play would have been written had Shakespeare finished it himself:

¹ *From Henry V to Hamlet*, p. 26.

I should conjecture that he had conceived the idea of a great historical drama on the subject of Henry VIII which would have included the divorce of Katherine, the fall of Wolsey, the rise of Cranmer, the coronation of Anne Bullen, and the final separation of the English from the Romish Church, which, being the one great historical event in the reign, would naturally be chosen as the focus of poetic interest.¹

Shakespeare, however, did not write *King John* round the signing of Magna Carta; and when Spedding shows how the play could have been given a greater unity had Shakespeare carried it through himself, either by his reproving Henry for his unfaithfulness in marriage at the conclusion, as in Nathan's rebuke to David, by the death of his son, or on the other hand by his keeping Katherine in the background, emphasizing the personal attractions of Anne Boleyn, and representing Henry as the champion of the Protestant cause, we can only be glad Shakespeare's idea of poetic interest was so different from Spedding's.

The play has as it stands the compassionate outlook so characteristic of the Fourth Period. It is, as the Prologue suggests, on the familiar theme of the vanity of worldly place and greatness, with Buckingham, Wolsey, and Katherine as strongly contrasted variations. The very pomp and pageantry of the play is justified artistically as a foil to the sombre realities of the situation. On this scene appears as by Providence the child Elizabeth. It would be easy to argue that it was a friend of the Reformation who wrote of Elizabeth:

She shall be lov'd and fear'd; her own shall bless her;
Her foes shake like a field of beaten corn,
And hang their heads with sorrow; good grows with her.
In her days every man shall eat in safety
Under his own vine what he plants; and sing
The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours.
God shall be truly known.²

To a dramatist, on Spedding's lines, who could write, 'God shall be truly known' of the English Reformation, the sympathetic

¹ *Transactions*, 1874, p. 16*.

² Act v, sc. v, 31-7.

portrait of the Catholic Katherine would be impossible. But they cannot be separated. If Fletcher wrote these lines he also wrote the great scene at Kimbolton that captivated such opposite temperaments as Johnson's and Swinburne's, where Katherine is glorified in death. And in two scenes¹ ascribed to Shakespeare, one of which reminds us directly of Katherine's wrongs, the birth of Elizabeth is clearly anticipated as the wonderful consummation of the whole sorry business. The lines, therefore, on which Spedding's metrical tests divide the play cut right across any division that might be indicated, as he also suggests, by divided minds on the subject-matter. Whether Shakespeare wrote the closing lines or not it is clear from what he did write that he meant to conclude on the note on which the play does in fact end.

And the survey of Elizabeth's times is what might be expected from Shakespeare. In Cranmer's prophecy as in Gaunt's dying thoughts for his country the enthusiasm of the language is in keeping with the speaker's feelings and situation. But there can be no doubt that these speeches are also meant to be taken as essentially truthful, for both Gaunt and Cranmer are represented as men divinely inspired; and that the dramatist's own sympathies were engaged is made certain by this consideration were it not otherwise abundantly clear. But why should Fletcher show such an interest in the age that had just passed away. He was born in 1579 and did not come to manhood till Elizabeth's reign was in its last dark days and all but over. He had not seen with the eyes of maturity any of its memorable events, or shared as a man

¹ Act II, sc. iii, 75-9 :

I have perus'd her well ;
Beauty and honour in her are so mingled
That they have caught the king ; and who knows yet
But from this lady may proceed a gem
To lighten all this isle ?

Act III, sc. ii, 49-52 :

She is a gallant creature, and complete
In mind and feature : I persuade me, from her
Will fall some blessing to this land, which shall
In it be memoriz'd,

its anxieties and triumphs. Yet there must have been some strong inward urge to lead the dramatist to recall the triumph of Elizabeth's reign in 1613 with a jealous successor within hearing. The earlier commentators could not persuade themselves that the passage was written except for Elizabeth's own ears, for did not Lord Bacon, as Bathurst observes, leave out his praise of Elizabeth in his *Advancement of Learning* to avoid displeasing James? It seemed incredible that any one should be so impolitic as to reverse this procedure. But though it is difficult to understand why Fletcher should do so, Shakespeare's praise of his own times is more easily understood.

There is no question of mere flattery to any sovereign. Theobald and Malone may be excused for hazarding a guess about the date of the play on this assumption, but Hickson's arguing that the ascription of the passage to Fletcher clears the character of Shakespeare, 'as the flatteries of James and Elizabeth may now go packing together', only shows how an old conjecture may still confuse the minds of later scholars after it has been disproved.¹ How could there be flattery of Elizabeth in 1613 when her ear had been stopped to all such strains ten years before this praise of her was written; for Hickson, like Spedding, regarded it as composed by Fletcher in the time of James. And if James is described as inheriting Elizabeth's greatness, how could Shakespeare have omitted mention of him without the gravest discourtesy? For he enjoyed as a member of the King's Company and as an individual the royal favour. And James did inherit her greatness, or at least that part of it which her genius had made heritable; and this was another of her triumphs. But not only does the date of the composition reduce the charge of flattery to nonsense, the whole tenor of the passage is of quite another temper. Here is the same love of country, now expressing itself in gratitude to a great sovereign who had made her people's welfare her first duty, that was sounded years before in Gaunt's dying rebuke to the King whom Chaucer had exhorted in vain to steadfastness:

¹ *Transactions*, 1874, p. 21*.

O prince, desyre to be honourable,
Cherish thy folk and hate extorcioun!
Suffre no thing, that may be reprevable
To thyn estat, don in thy regioun.
Shew forth thy swerd of castigacioun,
Dred God, do law, love trouthe and worthinesse,
And wed thy folk agein to stedfastnesse.

Elizabeth was a sovereign on Chaucer's pattern. And if Shakespeare had known some of the asperities of the reign as well as enjoyed its blessings, there had been time since it ended for him to see it in its place in the history that he had studied so passionately, and, remembering the material at his disposal, so attentively. If this is Shakespeare speaking of that part of the story which he had seen with his own eye and in which he had played his own part, it is easy to understand the inspiration in his words. Every commentator is permitted to remind us that those were indeed the halcyon days, free from the worst of civil distraction past and to come, that brought forth a brood of men and poets whose like has yet to come again. Why then should we not receive as Shakespeare's such a tribute to the time as might be expected from the greatest of them all. Shakespeare wrote no formal verses to mark the passing of the Queen, and as we have just lost a poet-laureate who refused to sing to order (and only the vulgar mistook his austere devotion to his country's fortunes and welfare for indifference), Shakespeare's silence need perplex no one. But that the emotions of that time, untroubled by the accidents and indignities that accompany everything mortal, might rise again from the tranquillity of memory to unite in such a judgement who can doubt? The times were worthy of it, and this has all the force of genuine recollection.

The initial guess which started the disintegration of *Henry VIII* can now be seen as a further instance of conjectural history. To-day the person and authority of the crown is inviolable and supreme as it has never been before, for in the person of the King the whole Empire finds its centre and allegiance. But in supporting the burden of modern government the person and personality of the sovereign

have had necessarily to be dissociated in a way that was not known to Tudor England. Theobald and Malone lived after the Declaration of Rights, and had not sufficient imagination to see in the close of *Henry VIII* anything but flattery to a sovereign. Shakespeare does indeed praise a Queen, but it is such praise, when allowance is made for the dramatic situation, as she had earned from a true lover of his country. Fortunately the characteristics of the verse make a revision of Malone's theory inevitable. But they provide no proof of Fletcher's authorship. The similarity between the verse of Fletcher and that of *Henry VIII* in certain externals suggested to Spedding, since it was the received opinion that there were two hands in the play, that Shakespeare's partner was Fletcher. This is a guess, however—for no mathematical or statistical probability attaches to Spedding's argument¹—that explains one feature of the play but raises many other difficulties. What is required is an explanation that will meet this difficulty and at the same time satisfy the other requirements of the problem. That the ascription of the entire play to Shakespeare solves the difficulties so far considered more satisfactorily than Spedding's suggestion is all that is claimed. It is clear, however, that this is the only solution that the external evidence permits.

Spedding could not be expected to anticipate the work of

¹ A useful quotation from a work dealing mathematically with the mutations that take place in the course of evolution may help to make this clear (see *Times Literary Supplement*, 28 Aug. 1930, p. 677).

'The ordinary mathematical procedure in dealing with any problem is, after abstracting what are believed to be the essential elements of the problem, to consider it as one of a system of possibilities infinitely wider than the actual, the essential relations of which may be apprehended by generalised reasoning, and subsumed in general formulae, which may be applied to any particular case considered.'

Spedding has not isolated the essentials of the problem, for the vital question of how modifications arise in the development of Shakespeare's verse is never seriously considered by him. He merely assumes, contrary to evidence, that such a modification as is found in *Henry VIII* could not arise. Nor has he considered the question of variation within the individual plays. How far he is from satisfying the remainder of these requirements is only too obvious.

Professor A. W. Pollard which has put the text of Shakespeare on an entirely new basis, but he is culpably careless in his treatment of this element in the problem. Against the authority of Heminge and Condell he objects *the editors were not critics*.¹ But eminent counsel do not venture to submit that the simple witnesses they have to examine are incapable of telling the truth because they have not a barrister's aptitude and training in the art of cross-examination. This is the province of Counsel (and in his own sphere of the scholar), and all he can expect from his witnesses is a consistent story of what they have heard or seen. Heminge and Condell are in this matter witnesses, and the more closely they have been interrogated by generations of scholars the more consistent has their evidence appeared. If Fletcher wrote the greater part of *Henry VIII*, then Heminge and Condell must have known it, for the play was written in 1612 or 1613, when they were managing the King's Players. They would pay Fletcher for his share and receive his manuscript, unless we suppose it was a secret transaction between Fletcher and Shakespeare. They would come to this knowledge not as a scholar might discover it or as a judge of style might divine it but in the simple way managers who had to pay for their wares would know what they were paying for. And if the play was largely Fletcher's they could not but know that it had no place in Shakespeare's works as long as the statements they made in their prefatory letters were allowed to stand. Nor does Spedding meet this objection by arguing that 'it was not the fashion then for authors to trouble the public with their jealousies'. Heywood has left the statement that Shakespeare was 'much offended with Mr. Jaggard that altogether unknown to him presumed to make so bold with his name' as to publish under it two of Heywood's poems. Both Heywood and Shakespeare moved in this matter. Nor will it do to argue that these were poems, while the question is one of plays. A scholar like Harvey did not in his *marginalia* treat *Hamlet* as something

¹ Mr. Robertson's version of this argument is *They were not judges of style* (*The Shakespeare Canon*, Part II, p. xviii).

altogether less important than *Lucrece*; and that Shakespeare had an active interest in his plays is certain unless *Shakespeare's Fight with the Pirates* is merely an historical romance of the Elizabethan theatre. To suppose he would have countenanced the publication of work by Fletcher as his, or that his friends would have taken this way of keeping his memory alive, is to imagine the Elizabethans in a state of communistic simplicity for which there is no evidence whatever.¹ What is now the orthodox story concerning *Henry VIII* begins and ends in conjecture.

V

To pass from the biographical and textual study of Shakespeare, another instance of the danger of judging the past by present conditions may be found in the common criticism of certain of his poetic masterpieces as ill-contrived for the stage.² It is often objected that *Lear* though touching the very heights of sublimity is yet a very defective example of stage-craft. And what, it is asked, can be made of *Antony and Cleopatra* with its forty odd scenes. The answer must be, on the present stage Nothing. But this does not imply that as a construction for the Elizabethan stage it was equally impossible. There the multiplicity of scenes and characters instead of being a hindrance could actually be used in furthering the essential drama. It was an unlocalized stage where no concessions were made to the undramatic demands of space and time, and the many scenes of *Antony and Cleopatra* seen in their proper place on such a stage may reveal, as Mr. Granville Barker has pointed out, Shakespeare's stage-craft at its very best. The freedom that Shakespeare enjoyed, the stage of visual illusion has inevitably lost. His treatment is impossible on our stage with its photographic

¹ Hack work then as now was often deliberately left anonymous. Special circumstances arose then, however, as they hardly do to-day. 'Much of the confusion . . . concerning the respective productivity of Beaumont and Fletcher is due to accident' (Gayley's *Beaumont*, p. 225). No allowance of this kind need be made for the Shakespeare Folio.

² With Lamb's objection to the 'theatrical' presentation of Shakespeare's plays one can only warmly agree.

scenery, its delays between scene and scene, its anxiety about place and time; but on the Elizabethan platform with no retarding properties or interruptions the play could run swiftly and gallantly off as Shakespeare planned it. It would indeed be strange, as Mr. Granville Barker has observed, if Shakespeare's skill failed him at the very moment his inspiration was strongest. To suppose that Dryden, whose adaptation has often been favourably compared with Shakespeare's, could teach Shakespeare his craft, is possible only to those who measure Shakespeare's work by present conventions. No one denies the Athenian drama its proper setting, and Shakespeare is as much entitled to his stage as are Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides to their orchestra and chorus.

Historical study does more than merely satisfy an antiquarian interest. It may never attain the ideal towards which it strives, but it climbs with infinite pains the heights on which the poet stands. Wordsworth, in the lines entitled *Stepping Westward*, reconstructs the situation, the place and time of day, in which a passer-by greeted him with the salutation, 'What, you are stepping westward?' not, however, that we may concern ourselves with these material aspects, nor even with the words themselves, but that we may hear, as he did, in the greeting,

a sound

Of something without place or bound.

To show us Shakespeare, as he appeared to his contemporaries, is only a means to an end. We do not need the Elizabethan Shakespeare, or any other Shakespeare, except so far as they enable us to understand the Shakespeare whose words come with a sound of something without place or bound and a power that gives fresh courage and joy on this earthly pilgrimage. Historical inquiry cannot, by itself, lead a reader to this point, but it may prevent him falling, by the way, a victim to his own prejudices and inexperience. The understanding requires some purge for the strange and disabling misconceptions that seem the inevitable consequence of any over-indulgence in conjecture.

PETER ALEXANDER.

TENSE

I came, I saw, I conquered.

The wan moon is setting behind the white wave.

We shall fight in the shade.

A CHARACTERISTIC feature of the verb in all the Indo-Germanic languages is that it habitually carries with it an indication of time. In the above examples the time references are to the past, the present, and the future respectively. It is not, however, true that every verb-form carries with it a time reference. In *laborare est orare* no association of time attaches to the infinitives. But so habitual is this association of the verb with time that in some languages the name for the verb is Time-word, and in all grammars the verb-forms are classified under the category of time or tense. The classification was first made by the Greeks of the Alexandrine age; their terminology was translated into Latin by the Roman grammarians; and these Latin tense-names have been taken over into English. The Greek scheme embraced eight tenses, although not all of these forms were to be found in any single Greek verb. Indeed the commonest model Greek verb, *τίπτω*, first adopted by Dionysius Thrax, the first of all grammarians, and still found in modern Greek grammars, is largely fictitious. The Greek tenses are present, imperfect, future, first aorist, second aorist, perfect, pluperfect, and future perfect. The Latin tense-scheme has two divergences from the Greek: instead of two aorist forms for the simple past, there is only one, the *tempus praeteritum*; and, secondly, this form serves also for the perfect. The outstanding feature of the Greek scheme is its opulence, a quality found also in its moods. And these two opulences are intimately connected by the fact that in certain contrasted types of sentences differences expressed by a difference of tense in Latin (and in English) are expressed by a difference of mood in Greek. The outstanding feature of the Latin scheme, apart from its com-

parative simplicity, is the precision with which the time indications of the several verb-forms were adhered to: *If you do that, you will be punished; Si id feceris, poenas dabis.* When a Roman meant to say 'will have done', he said 'will have done'. We are content with the simple brevity of a 'timeless' 'do'.

Tenses in Old English.

The composition of the texts written in the Germanic language that was formerly known as Anglo-Saxon and is now commonly called Old English, extended over a period of some 400 years, from the seventh to the eleventh century. The language includes a number of dialects, and the MSS. often present a perplexing mixture of dialectal varieties. The most prominent dialect was the West Saxon, the language of King Alfred; but even this King's English did not attain any such supremacy over the others as Latin held among the Italic dialects. Consequently Old English lacks the uniformity of texture that characterizes the Latin of the golden age.

The scheme of tenses in Old English is comparatively simple, much simpler than those of Latin and Greek. Whereas in these classical languages all the tenses of the active voice, as well as most of the tenses of the passive, are determined by inflexions or other internal adaptations; in Old English, as in Modern English, only two tenses are independent of auxiliary aid—the present and the preterite in the active voice. All the others are resolved or compound in form.

It is here proposed to give examples of the several Old English tenses, simple and resolved, and to follow each group of examples with comments suggested by them. The tenses of the active voice are taken first.

Simple Present Tense.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) <i> Ic ðāra frætwa</i> | <i>Frēan fealles ðanc,</i> |
| <i>wuldur-cyninge,</i> | <i>wordum secge,</i> |
| <i>ēcum Dryhtne,</i> | <i>þe ic hēr on starie.</i> |

[Beowulf, 2794-6: 8th c.]

To the Lord of all, the King of glory,
the Eternal God, I utter thanks
for these jewels that I gaze on here.

- (2) *Tō hwan ācsast þū mē be þyssere synne hwæðer heo hefige sȝ?*
[Wærferth: 9th c.]

Why do you ask me concerning this sin whether it be heavy?

- (3) *Beorgas þær ne muntus stēape ne stondað; ne stān-clifu hēah hlīfað, swā hēr mid ūs.* [The Phoenix: 8th c.]

No hills or steep mountains stand there (sc. in the islands of the blessed); nor do stone-cliffs tower up high, as here with us.

The first point suggested by these examples is one of general application to the Old English verbs: whether a sentence be affirmative or interrogative or negative, the form of the verb remains unchanged. A second point to consider is the sense in which these times are present. In the first two examples the time-reference of the verbs *starie* and *ācsast* is to the actual present (a), while the time-reference of the verbs in the third sentence is to the general or eternal now (b). In Modern English the former sense is usually expressed by the resolved form of the verb, e.g. *am gazing*, the unresolved form being usually reserved for the latter. In Old English the simple form serves equally for both senses.

Further examples:

- (a) 1. *Mīn se lēofesta fæder, hwæt is þes iunga man þe on gēan þē on swā wurðlicum sette sit?* [Apollonius: 11th c.]

My dearest father, who is this young man that sits (is sitting) opposite you on so honourable a seat?

2. *Nū of hreðerlocan*
tō þām sōþan gefēan sūwel fundað.
[Cynewulf, Guthlac: 8th c.]

Now from my breast my soul hastens (is hastening) towards the true bliss.

- (b) 1. *Swæ swæ mid lāðre hwistlunga mon hors gestilled, swæ eac mid ðære ilcan hwistlunga mon mæg hund āstyrian.*

[Alfred, Cura Pastoralis: 9th c.]

Just as with soft whistling one quietens a horse, so too with the same whistling one can rouse a hound.

2. *Swā weorðlice wide tōsāweð Dryhten his duguðe.*

[The Gifts of Men.]

So excellently wide the Lord scatters his gifts.

Present for Future.

1. *Gewitaþ forð beran*
wæpen ond gewædu ; ic eow wisige.

[Beowulf, 291-2.]

Go forth bearing
weapons and war-gear ; I guide (will guide) you.

2. *Ðū þe self hafast*
dædum gefremed, þæt þin dōm lyfað
āwa tō aldre.

[Beowulf, 953-5.]

By thy deeds thou thyself hast brought-it-to-pass for thee that thy glory lives (will live) for ever and ever.

3. *Fȳnd syndon ēowere*
gedēmed tō dēaðe, and gē dōm āgon,
tīr set tohtan, swā ēow getācnod hafað
mīhtig Dryhten þurh mīne hand.

[Judith : 8th c.]

Your enemies are doomed to death, and ye have (shall have) honour, glory in the battle, as the mighty Lord has betokened to you through my hand.

4. *Ēadige bēoð þā līðan, forðanþe hī þæt land geāgniað.*

[Aelfric, Homilies : 10th-11th c.]

Blessed are the meek, for they inherit (shall inherit: Vulgate *possidebunt*) the earth.

This use of the present for the future is exceedingly common, so much so that it might almost be described as normal. In Modern English the appropriate auxiliary for each of the first two examples is *will*, for each of the last two *shall*.

Historic Present.

The use of the present tense in reference to past happenings comes quite naturally and unconsciously to simple unsophisticated people, especially in moods of emotion or excitement. At a higher, the literary, level it is a common artistic device, frequently resorted to by historians and other

writers to give vividness to their narrative. Whether it be that the literature of Old English seldom descends to the vulgar level or rises to the highest, the fact seems to be that in it this usage is of rare occurrence. The Chronicle, for example, plods steadily along from year to year, with no deviation from the normal past tense. The highest level of artistic narration is reached in *Beowulf*, and there the historic present is for certain resorted to in one passage only, ll. 2041 ff. In the course of a carousal the Heathobards were grievously offended by the entry of a Dane wearing the heirlooms of their fathers. The narrative continues—

*Donne cwið æt bēore, sē ðe bēah gesyhlð,
cald æsc-wiga, sē ðe call geman,
gārcwealm gumena — him bið grim sefa —
onginneð geomor-mōð geongum cempa
þurh hreðra gehygd higes cunnian,
wīg-bealu weccan, ond þæt word acwyð.*

Then at the beer-drinking, one that sees the treasure,
an old warrior, one that remembers all,
the spear-slaying of men — his mind is grim—
begins in sad mood to test the temper
of a young warrior through the thought of his heart,
to waken baleful strife, and this word he speaks.

Evidence of a deliberate avoidance of the historic present is found in the translations of the Vulgate, where, for example, the frequently recurring *ait's* and *dicit's* of the Latin are invariably rendered by *cwæð* and *sæde*, not by *cwið* or *segð*.

Present for Future Perfect.

1. *Gif þū þæt angin fremest, idesa sēo betste, forhele ic incrum
Herran þæt mē hearmes swā fela Ādām gespræc.*

[The Temptation : 10th c.]

If thou performest the deed, best of women, I hide (will hide)
from your Lord that Adam spoke so many evil things to me.

2. *Gif mon oðres wudu bærneð oðre hēaweð unāliefedne, forgielde
ælc græt trēow mid V scillingum.* [Laws of Alfred : 9th c.]

If one burns or hews down another's wood without leave, let
him pay for each great tree with five shillings.

There is no need to multiply examples of this use. In reference to the earlier of two futures the present is the tense uniformly employed in English at all stages of its history. Latin is unique in respect of the precision with which this two-fold time-reference is indicated.

Narrative Past Tense.

Se cyng Willelm sende þā ofer eall Englalond in tō ælcere scīre his men, ond lett āgān ut hū fela hundred hȳda wæron innon þære scīre, oððe hwæt se cyng him self hæfde landes ond orfes innan þām lande. [The Chronicle, 1086.]

Then the king William sent his men over all England into every shire, and bade them find out how many hundred hides were in the shire, or what the King himself had of land or cattle in the land.

This is the ordinary past tense of ordinary narrative. Further illustration is unnecessary.

Past for Imperfect.

1. *Cōm þā tō Heorote, ðær Hring-Dene
geond þæt sæld swæfun.* [Beowulf, 1280-1.]

She came then to Heorot, where the Ring-Danes
throughout the hall slept (were sleeping).

2. *Sōna þæt onfunde . . . þæt þær gumena sum
æl-wiht eard ufan cunnode.* [Beowulf, 1497-1500.]

She soon found that there some mortal explored (was exploring) from above the dwelling of the monsters.

3. *In þām þā Florentius āna eardode, sume dæge hē āstrehte hine
sylfne in gebed.* [Wærferth, Gregory: 9th c.]

While Florentius dwelt (was dwelling) there alone, one day he prostrated himself in prayer.

4. *Sē wæs mid ele gesmærowed, . . . and bæc geongra manna
plegan on handa.* [Apollonius: 11th c.]

He was besmeared with oil, . . . and carried (was carrying) young men's playthings in his hand.

In each of these examples the action is continuous. The

appropriate form in Modern English is the past progressive tense. This use of the past tense is quite common.

Past for Perfect.

1. *Nænigne ic under swegle sēlan hȳrde*
hord-mādm hæleþa. [Beowulf, 1197-8.]

I heard (have heard) under heaven of no finer treasure of heroes.

2. *Ðā cwæð se hālgā tō ðām heard-nebbum, Gif se Ælmihtiga*
ēow ðisces geūðe, brūcað þæra wæstma, and mē ne biddað.

[Ælfric: 11th c.]

Then said the holy man to the hard-nebbed bird, If the Almighty granted (has granted) this to you, enjoy the fruits and do not ask me.

3. *Lēofe dohtor, þes iunga man . . . gecwēmd e mē manna betst on*
ðām plegan; forðām ic hine gelaðode tō ðysum ūrum gebēorscipe.

[Apollonius: 11th c.]

Dear daughter, this young man . . . pleased me best of the men at the play; therefore I invited (have invited) him to this our banquet.

The special force of the perfect tense is not so much to indicate a completed action as to imply that this particular happening of the past has a bearing on the present. The implications of the bracketed verbs of the three above renderings are—‘I consequently know’; ‘You have God’s leave, don’t ask mine’; and ‘That’s why he is here’. This bearing of the past on the present is frequently indicated in Old English, as in Modern English, by the resolved perfect tense; but the older usage, the simple past, lacking in this delicacy of suggestion, is also of frequent occurrence. Latin too, it may be noted, makes no distinction between the narrative past and the perfect.

Past for Pluperfect.

1. *Hē hæfde eorlas on his bendum þe dydan ongēan his willan.*
[Chronicle, 1086.]

He had earls in his durance that did (had acted) against his will.

Future with 'shall'.

1. *Wā bið þām þe sceal
of langoþe lēofes ābidan.*
[The Wife's Complaint, 52-3 : 8th c.]

Woe is to him that shall (has to) abide in longing for his dear one.

2. *Ic sceal hraðe cunnan
hwæt ðū ūs tō duguðum gedōn wille.*
[Cynewulf, Andreas, 391-2 : 8th c.]

I shall (must) quickly know what thou wilt do for help to us.

3. *Ic mid elne sceall
gold gegangen, oððe gūð nimeð,
feorh-bealu frēcne frēan ēowerne.*
[Beowulf, 2535-7.]

I shall win gold
by my prowess, or war, the terrible
life-bale, takes (will take) your lord.

4. *Nē sceole gē swā sōfte sinc gegangan ;
ūs sceal ord and ecg ær gesēman,
grim gūð-plega, ær wē gafol sylloŋ.*
[Maldon, 59-61 : 10th c.]

Nor shall ye so softly win treasure ;
spear-point and sword-edge, grim war-play, shall
first reconcile us, ere we give tribute.

5. *Ðær ābidan sceal
maga māne fāh miclan dōmes,
hū him scir Metod scrīfan wille.*
[Beowulf, 977-9.]

There the crime-stained mortal shall abide the great judgement, as the bright Maker will ordain for him.

In each of these five examples the sense of obligation is quite evident. Indeed, in the first two, the tense is present rather than future; in the others the secondary meaning of futurity becomes progressively apparent. The time of the last example is still proverbially remote.

Future with 'will'.

1. *Dæt ic bi mē sylfum secgan wille,
 þæt ic hwile wæs Heodenunga scōp,
 dryhtne dýre; mē wæs Deor noma.*

[Deor's Lament, 35-7: 7th c.]

This I will (want to) say concerning myself, that for a while I was the bard of the Heodenings, dear to my lord; Deor was my name.

2. *Sto wundorlice beorhtnes þe ealle ðing gebirht ond eallum welt,
 nyle þæt ða sǣwla forweorðan, ac wile hī onlīhtan.*

[Alfred, Boethius: 9th c.]

The wonderful brightness that enlightens all things and rules all things, will not (does not wish) that the souls of men perish, but will (wishes to) enlighten them.

3. *Wē ðe eðlice mid us willað
 ferigan frēolice ofer fisces bæð.*

[Cynewulf, Andreas, 292-3: 8th c.]

We will gladly take you with us freely over the fish's bath.

4. *Ic mīnne can
 glædne Hrōbulf, þæt hē þā geogoðe wile
 ārum healðan.*

[Beowulf, 1180-2.]

I know that my own
 gracious Hrothulf will rule the youth
 with honour.

5. *Hī willað eow tō gafole gāras syllan.*

[Maldon, 46: 10th c.]

They will give you spears for tribute.

In each of these five sentences the sense of intention is quite evident. In the first two the tense is present rather than future; in the others the secondary meaning of futurity becomes progressively apparent.

Resolved Perfect with 'have'.

1. *Hæfst þē wið Drihten dýrne geworhtne.*

[Genesis B, 507: 9th c.]

Thou hast made thyself dear to the Lord.

2. *Nū scealc hafað*
þurh Drihtnes miht dæd gefremede.

[Beowulf, 939-40.]

Now a retainer hath through the might of the Lord performed a deed.

3. *Hē hæfð ūs þæs lēohtes bescyrede.*

[Genesis B, 392: 9th c.]

He has deprived us of the light.

4. *Hafað ūs God sylfa*
forswāpen on þās sweartan mistas.

[Genesis B, 390-1: 9th c.]

God himself has swept us into these dark mists.

5. *Hē hæfð nū gemearcod ānne middangeard, þær hē hæfð mon*
geworhtne æfter his onlicnesse.

[Genesis B, 395-6: 9th c.]

He has now marked out a world, where he has created man after his likeness.

These five sentences give an interesting picture of the development of the perfect tense in English. In Old English this tense presents itself in a stage of transition from one grammatical relation to another. The difference between these relations both in structure and in meaning may be seen in Modern English in these two sentences: A certain man had a tree planted in his vineyard; and, He had planted a tree in his vineyard. In the first structure the attachment of the participle is primarily to the noun, in the second to the auxiliary 'had'. Each of the first three of the above examples exhibits the first structure; each of the participles agrees in case, number, and gender with the corresponding noun or pronoun. In the fourth example the participle is uninflected; there is no agreement. The fifth sentence presents both varieties, non-agreement followed by agreement. It may be noted further that the preference of one variety to the other does not depend on the word-order of the sentence.

An interesting parallel is furnished by the development from Latin of the French perfect tense: *Inclusum in curia*

senatum habent; Ils ont enclos le sénat dans la curie.
 French presents also an interesting contrast to English in the troublesome persistence of agreement when the participle is preceded by the object noun or pronoun.

Another example:

Hæbbe ic ēac geāhsod, þæt se æglæca
for his won-hj̆dum wæpna ne recceð.

[Beowulf, 483-4.]

I have learned too that the monster out of his wild folly recketh not of weapons.

This is added because of the reminder it affords of the Latin *habeo compertum*.

Pluperfect with 'had'.

1. *Hæfde se gōda Gēata lēoda*
ceopan gecorone. [Beowulf, 205-6.]

The good (prince) had chosen champions of the Geat people.

2. *Hrafe heo æpelinga ānne hæfde*
fæste befangen. [Beowulf, 1295-6.]

Suddenly she had seized fast one of the chieftains.

3. *Gesett hæfde hē hīe swā gesæliglice ;*
ænne hæfde hē swā swiðne geworhtne.
 [Genesis B, 252: 9th c.]

He had set them so blissfully ;
 one he had made so mighty.

The pluperfect presents no new grammatical feature. In the first example there is agreement, in the second non-agreement. The third example exhibits both—non-agreement followed immediately by agreement.

Perfect with 'be'.

1. *Sōðlice hī sind forðfarene, ðā ðe ymbe ðæs cildes feorh syrwdon.*
 [Aelfric, Nativity: 10th-11th c.]

Verily they are departed, those that plotted against the child's life.

2. *Hēr syndon geferede, feorran cumene,
ofer geofenes begang, Gēata lēode.* [Beowulf, 361-2.]

Here are fared, come from afar,
over ocean's expanse, people of the Geats.

3. *Nū sint gēardagas
æfter fyrst-mearce forð gewitene,
lif-wynne geliden.* [Cynewulf, Elene, 1266-8: 8th c.]

Now are the days-of-old
passed away at the appointed time,
life-joys gone.

4. *Ic þuss gehroren eam ond āweg-gewiten.*
[Alfred, Orosius: 9th c.]

I (sc. Babylon) am thus fallen and passed away.

5. *Is his eafora nū*
heard hēr cumen. [Beowulf, 375-6.]

Now is his bold son come here.

Instead of the auxiliary 'have' the verb 'be' is used to form the perfect of a number of intransitive verbs, especially verbs of motion. Though less common than it used to be, this usage is quite familiar in modern English. *How are the mighty fallen!* While this combination may be called a perfect tense, it is so with a difference. The participle is felt to be rather adjectival than verbal, and the time is present, not past. The tense might be called a resultant perfect. The same uncertainty as in the 'have' forms is seen in respect of agreement. In the first two examples the participles agree; the third example presents both varieties; in the fourth there is non-agreement, Babylonia being feminine; lastly, the fifth is neutral and non-committal.

Pluperfect with 'be'.

1. *Wæs hira blæd scacen.*
Their glory was departed. [Beowulf, 1124.]

2. *Wæs ðā eft cumen,*
lēof to lēodum. [Judith, 146-7: 9th c.]

Then was she come again,
dear to the people.

3. *Ic ðā gemunde hū sio lūr Lædengedwodes ær ðissum āfeallen
wæs giond Angelcynn.* [Alfred, Cura Pastoralis : 9th c.]

I then remembered how the knowledge of the Latin tongue was ere this fallen away throughout England.

This form of the pluperfect—a resultant pluperfect—occurs fairly often. The examples exhibit the same uncertainty regarding agreement.

With these intransitive verbs, however, the pluperfect with 'was' is by no means general. On the contrary, the normal formation with 'had' is equally common. It is illustrated by the examples following:

1. *Wæs se fēond full nēah,
þe on þā frēcnan fyrd gefaren hæfde
ofer langne weg.* [Genesis B, 688–90 : 9th c.]

The fiend was very near,
who had come on that daring expedition
over a long way.

2. *Ofer dēop gelād wæs se drohtað strong,
ær þon wē tō londe geliden hæfdon
ofer hrēone hrycg.* [Cynewulf, Christ, 857–9 : 8th c.]

Over the deep way the life was hard,
ere that we had sailed to land
over the rough ridge (of the sea).

3. *Ðā hī swā feor gegān hæfdon swā hī þā woldon, þā cōmon hī
tō scipon.* [The Chronicle, 1010.]

When they had gone as far as they then wished, then they came to their ships.

Progressive Tenses.

A noteworthy feature of Greek and Latin and the modern derivatives of Latin is that in all these languages there is one progressive tense and one only, the imperfect. Of Old English it has already been noted that the simple present and past tenses were used to denote happenings of every kind, whether progressive or other. A unique feature of the English verb is the gradual development in the course of its history of a complete scheme of continuous or progressive tenses, such as

no other language possesses; and it is particularly interesting to note that the beginning of this development—a beginning, it is true, somewhat feeble and hesitating—was made in the Old English period.

Present Progressive.

1. *Ealle þā ðing þe hēr liciað on þisum andweardum life sint eorðlice : forþȳ hī sint flēonde.* [Alfred, Boethius : 9th c.]

All the things that please here in this present life are earthly; therefore they are flee(t)ing.

2. *Wē on þām gecnāwan magon þæt þeos world is scyðdende ond heonomweard.* [Blickling Homily : 10th c.]

We can learn from that that this world is hastening-away and henceward (transient).

3. *Hē ys Godes sunu and ēac man, and ēac se dēað ys hyme ondrædende.* [The Harrowing of Hell : 11th c.]

He is God's son and also man, and also death is dreading (afraid of) him.

4. *Symle hē bið gifende, ond ne wanað his nǣfre nāwuh. Symle hē bið lōciende, nē slæpð hē nǣfre.* [Alfred, Cura Pastoralis : 9th c.]

He (sc. God) is always giving, and nothing of him ever wanes. He is always looking; he never sleeps.

5. *Ac nū manna gitsung is swā byrnende swā þæt fȳr on þære helle, sēo is on þā munte þe Etna hātte; se munt bið simle swelfe birnende and ealle þā nēahstowe þǣrymbūtan forbærnð.*

[Alfred, Boethius : 9th c.]

But now men's avarice is as burning as the fire in the hell that is on the mountain that is called Etna; the mountain is always burning with brimstone and burns up all the neighbourhood thereabout.

6. *Oncnāw nū hū fæla ēca tyntrega þū bist prōwigende on mȳnre ēcan gehealtsumnysse.* [The Harrowing of Hell : 11th c.]

(Hell to Satan)—Recognize now how many everlasting torments thou art enduring in my everlasting keeping.

The present progressive, illustrated in point of form by the above examples, is of rare occurrence in Old English. In

Modern English this tense is the true present, used to indicate what is happening now, e.g. *The Premier is staying over the week-end at Chequers*. The unresolved present, on the other hand, indicates what is generally or eternally true, e.g. *The Premier lives at 10 Downing Street*. It seems doubtful whether any of the examples in the above scanty gleanings represents exactly the modern usage. In every case the statement is eternally true. In the first four examples the participles are adjectival or nominal (*God is a perpetual giver*) rather than verbal. A nearer approach to the modern usage is seen in the fifth example, but even there the second—verbal—use of the participle ‘burning’ is evidently suggested by the earlier metaphorical and adjectival use. One feels sorry that the eternality of Satan’s suffering is so much emphasized in the sixth example; otherwise it might be accepted as a genuine forerunner of the modern progressive.

Although instances of this resolved tense occur but seldom, they are none the less important, marking as they do the first extension of the progressive beyond the imperfect.

Progressive Past Tense.

While, as has been already noted, the simple past tense is often progressive in meaning, examples of the resolved progressive form are quite common. The range of its application in Old English is wider than it is in Modern English; three uses seem definitely distinguishable.

Continuative Imperfect.

1. *Onð on feohtende wæron oþ niht.* [The Chronicle, 871.]
And they were fighting on (continued fighting) till night.
2. *Onð hie ealle on þone cyning wærun feohtende, oð þæt hie hine ofslægenne hæfdon.* [The Chronicle, 755.]
And they all were fighting (continued fighting) against the King till they had him slain.
3. *Æþelwulf þȳ ilcan gēare fērde tō Rōme mid micelre weorþnesse, onð þær wæs xii mōnaþ wunende.* [The Chronicle, 855.]

The same year Æthelwulf went to Rome in great splendour, and was staying (continued to stay) there twelve months.

This turn of phrase is fairly common in *The Chronicle*. It is certainly not modern.

Historic Descriptive Imperfect.

1. *Ða ðys wæron eall gehýrende ealle þā hēahfēderas and þā wýtegan, hig wæron swýðe geblissigende and God wuldrigende.*

[The Harrowing of Hell: 11th c.]

When all the patriarchs and the prophets were hearing all this, they were greatly rejoicing and glorifying God.

2. *Sē eadiga Mathēus þā and se hāliga Andrēas hīe wæron cyssende him betwēonon.* [The Legend of St. Andrew: 10th c.]

Then the blessed Matthew and the holy Andrew were kissing each other.

3. *Ac hē wæs hýne āsceacende eal swā eam þonne hē myd hrædum flyhte wyle forð āflēon.* [The Harrowing of Hell: 11th c.]

But he (sc. Lazarus) was shaking himself just as an eagle when he will fly forth in swift flight.

4. *Se hālg Dryhten wæs þā Ādāmes hand healdende and hig Michaële þām hēahengle syllende, and hymself wæs on heofenas farende, and ealle þā hālgan wæron þā Mychaële þām hēahengle æfter-fyligende, and hig ealle in gelædde on neorxnawang myd wuldorfulre blysse.* [Indidem.]

The holy Lord was then holding Adam's hand and giving it to Michael the archangel and was himself going up to heaven, and all the saints were then following after Michael the archangel, and he led them all into paradise with glorious bliss.

5. *Onð hē wæs hīe getrymmende mid þý heofonlecan wegneste, and him oðres līfes ingong gegearwode.*

[The Alfredian Bede, Caedmon: 9th c.]

And he was strengthening himself with the heavenly viaticum, and prepared for himself the entry into the other life.

This use of the resolved imperfect occurs frequently. It is descriptive or pictorial in effect, presenting as it does the happenings of the past as in process of accomplishment. The usage is, of course, quite common; and the point of the preceding group of examples is that in them it is pressed beyond

the modern limit. A similarly excessive use of the imperfect is frequently found in Xenophon and other classical historians. In the last example, where both resolved and unresolved forms appear, there seems no difference in meaning to account for the difference of form.

Modern Imperfect.

1. *Ðær wæs on blōde brim weallende ;
atol ȝða geswing, eal gemenged
hāton heolfre, heorudrēore wēol.*

[Beowulf, 847-9.]

Then the water was seething with blood ; the frightful swirl of the waves, all mingled with hot gore, seethed with battle-blood.

2. *Atol æglæca ehtende wæs,
deorc deap-scūa, duguþe ond geogoþe.*

[Beowulf, 159-60.]

The dreadful demon, the dark death-shadow, was pursuing old men and young.

3. *Mið þi sē hālga Andrēas þanon wæs farenda, him ætiwode
Drihten Hælend Crist on þām wege.*

[The Legend of St. Andrew : 10th c.]

While the holy Andrew was going thence, the Lord Saviour Christ appeared to him on the way.

4. *And ne foresæde ic ēow, þā ðā ic on eorðan lyfigende wæs, þæt
deade men arȝsan sceoldon ?* [The Harrowing of Hell : 11th c.]

And did I not foretell to you, then when I was living on earth, that dead men should arise ?

5. *ðā ðā sē apostol þā lāre sprecende wæs, ðā bær sum wuduwe
hire suna tīc tō bebyrgenne.* [Aelfric, Assumption : 10th-11th c.]

When the apostle was uttering this teaching, then a widow carried her son's body to bury it.

6. *Ðā ic wæs Dryhten byddende æt neorxna-wanges geate, þā
ætȝwode mē Michaël se hēahengel.*

[The Harrowing of Hell : 11th c.]

When I was entreating the Lord at the gate of Paradise, then Michael the archangel appeared to me.

Instances of the resolved imperfect occur rarely in Old English verse. The first two of the above examples are the only instances in *Beowulf*, and in the second of these it is interesting to note that the resolved form ('was welling') is followed immediately by the habitual form ('welled'). In prose the resolved form, though by no means frequent, is much commoner. The last four examples are all in conformity with modern usage.

Most of the Old English verse is retrospective in subject-matter, attitude, and style. Most of the prose is modern in attitude and subject-matter, in the sense that it deals with happenings in which the writers were personally interested. In particular, a large part of it consists of Christian propaganda, and the authors were men who were familiar with the Latin of the Vulgate. From the absence of the resolved imperfect from Old English verse and its relative frequency in prose it seems a fair inference that this form was a new development, which was in some measure at least due to the influence of Latin. This conclusion is fortified by its usage, which is peculiarly tentative and unsure, and gives a distinct impression of experiment. This feature may be further illustrated by the following perverse sentence:—

Mid þȳ . . . se cyning elde þā gȳt to gelȳfanne . . . ond geornlice mid him seolfum smēade . . . , þā wæs sume dæge se Godes wer ingongende tō him þær hē āna sæt.

[Alfred's *Beda*: The Conversion of Edwin: 9th c.]

While the King still hesitated (was hesitating) to believe and earnestly considered (was considering) with himself . . . , then one day the man of God was going (went) in to him where he sat (was sitting) alone.

Progressive Present Passive with 'is'.

1.

*Gifen bið gewræged,
flōd āfȳsed, fām gewealcen.*

[Riddle III: 8th c.]

(In a storm) The sea is stirred,
the flood roused, the foam tossed.

2. *Swā hwæt swā wit hēr morðres þoliað,*
hit is nū Ādāme eall forgolden.

[Genesis B, 755-6 : 9th c.]

Whatever we two (devils) suffer here of misery it is now all requited on Adam.

3. *Ðonne bēoð þȳ hefigran heortan benne*
sāre æfter swæsne; sorȳ bið genūwād.

[The Wanderer, 49-50 : 8th c.]

Then are the wounds of his heart the heavier, sore-longing after the beloved ; sorrow is renewed.

4. *Bēoð þonne āmerede monna gāstas,*
beorhte ābȳwde, þurh bryne fȳres.

[The Phoenix, 544-5 : 8th c.]

The souls of men are then refined, brightly purified, through the burning of fire.

In Old English this tense exhibits the same duplicity of meaning as it does in Modern English. In the above examples the sense is progressive ; in Modern English it is more explicitly expressed by the progressive form—*It is now being requited on Adam*. The corresponding tense in Latin is the present passive—*Mare agitur* ; *Cura renovatur*.

Perfect Passive with 'is'.

1. *Ðæt īgland is eal beworpen mid sealtum brymme.*

[Ælfric : 10th-11th c.]

That island is all surrounded by the salt sea.

2. *Ac ælc mon þe allunga underþeoded bið unþearcum forlæt his Sceppend.*

[Alfred, Boethius : 9th c.]

But every man that is altogether enslaved by his vices forsakes his Creator.

3. *Nū is ðonne sō æx āsett on ðone wȳrt-truman ðæs trēowes.*

[Alfred, Cura Pastoralis : 9th c.]

Now the axe is set to the root of the tree.

4. *Ne eom ic āsend būton tō ðām scēapum Israhēla hȳwædene þe losedon.*

[Ælfric : 9th-10th c.]

I am not sent but to the sheep of the house of Israel which were lost.

The more common of the two uses of this tense is illustrated by the above examples. While the tense is present in form, the sense is that of the perfect; it may be described as a resultant present. The corresponding tense in Latin is the perfect; the verbs of the last two examples represent the Vulgate *posita est* and *missus sum*.

Resolved Tenses with 'weorðan'.

The Old English tense scheme includes another auxiliary, 'weorðan', to become (German 'werden'), which is used alongside of, 'bēon' to form resolved passive tenses. This verb has long ago disappeared from the language. ('Woe worth the day' has only a semblance of life in grammar books.)

1. *Secgað sæ-līðend þæt þæs sele stande*
 īdel ond unnyt siððan æfen-lēoht
 under heofones hador beholen weorðeð.

[Beowulf, 411-5.]

Seafarers say that this hall stands
 empty and useless after the evening light
 becomes (is) hidden under heaven's vault.

2. *For ðæm se eorðlica gefērscepe hine tiehð on ðā lufe his ealdan ungewunan, hē sceal simle hīgian ðæt hē weorðe onbryrð ond geedniwad tō ðæm heofonlican eðle.*

[Alfred, Cura Pastoralis: 9th c.]

Inasmuch as earthly companionship draws him to the love of his old evil habits, he must always strive that he become (be) incited and renewed towards the heavenly life.

3. *Hē mid Eotenum wearð*
 on fēonda geweald forð forlācen. [Beowulf, 902-8.]

 Among the Jutes he was
 enticed forth into foemen's power.

4. *Ðær wearð ofslægen Lucumon, cynges gerāfa.*

[The Chronicle, 897.]

There was slain Lucumon, the King's reeve.

The use of 'weorðan' to form the present passive is not common, and in this tense the sense of 'becoming' is still prominent. In the past tense, where it is used much more

frequently, it is practically an alternative to 'be'. The fourth of the above sentences is preceded almost immediately by—*On þā̅m wā̅ron ēac þā̅ men ofslā̅gene bū̅ton fī̅fum*; On that ship too the men were slain except five.

'Weorðan' with Intransitive Verbs.

1. *Onð hāt wyrcean twēgan stengas of ðā̅m trē̅owe ðe is hā̅ten sethim, ðæt ne wyrð nā̅fre forrotad.* [Cura Pastoralis: 9th c.]

And bid (them) work two poles of the tree that is called sethim, which never becomes decayed (rotten).

2. *Ðā̅ gelamp hit þæt æt ðā̅m gyftum wīn wearð ā̅teorod.*
[Aelfric, Assumption: 10th–11th c.]

Then it happened that at the marriage wine became failed (was awanting).

3. *Sum wegfarende mann fērde wið þone feld, þā̅ wearð his hors gesī̅clod.* [Aelfric, Oswald: 10th–11th c.]

A wayfaring man was going along the field, when his horse became sickened (fell ill).

4. *Wyrð ne cū̅bon,
gē̅o-sceaft grimme, swā̅ hit ā̅gangen wearð
eorla manegum.* [Beowulf, 1233–5.]

They knew not Fate,
grim destiny, as it had gone forth
for many of the earls.

Occasionally 'weorðan' is used with the past participle of intransitive verbs, though less frequently than 'bēon'. In these instances the participle is rather adjectival than verbal in force, and in the auxiliary the sense of becoming or growing is clearly felt. In the last example, however, the tense is a genuine pluperfect.

From this survey of the tense system of Old English several points of interest become apparent. The most noteworthy is the clear evidence that it presents of a process of development. What is suggested by it is emergence from a simpler system, where two pliable and accommodating tenses, the present and the past, did most, if not all, of the work of verbal communication. The present served for both present

and future happenings; and the past for all the past happenings, whether nearer or more remote, standing at once for the imperfect, the preterite, the perfect, and the pluperfect. Further, these two tenses served for all happenings of whatever kind, whether momentary or continuous or what not. This scanty supply of verb forms, it may be added, was eked out by a profusion of *then's* and *ere's* and *while's* and such-like auxiliary time apparatus.

The main points in the gradual differentiation of form are three:

(1) The growing use of 'shall' and 'will' for futurity. The only regret here is that posterity has been left with a troublesome and perplexing choice of auxiliary.

(2) The greater precision of expression in regard to past events by the use of the auxiliaries 'have' and 'had' and 'is' and 'was'.

Here again is an apparent superabundance, but the nicety of expression rendered possible by it makes it not merely acceptable but even welcome.

(3) The beginnings of a form of expression for continuous happenings. While this change is the least conspicuous because it is the least fully developed, it is also the most interesting because it is the most pregnant.

While in some respects tentative and uncertain, the tense-system of Old English may be regarded on the whole with grateful satisfaction. The only false start in it is the unnecessary duplication of passive auxiliaries, and the rarity of 'weorðan' in Middle English proves that this mistake was soon recognized and rectified. The wide extension of the progressive form beyond the imperfect is a comparatively late development, particularly its extension into the passive voice; but the sowing of this slow-growing mustard-seed was clearly done in the Old English period. The only important new developments left for later periods are the resolved forms of the verb in interrogative, negative, and emphatic sentences.

JOHN DONNE AND CONTEMPORARY PREACHERS

THEIR PREPARATION OF SERMONS FOR DELIVERY AND FOR PUBLICATION

THE objects of this paper are, first, to trace the normal history of the text of a seventeenth-century sermon from its delivery to its publication, illustrating the account with a few examples from well-known and easily accessible material; second, to recount the textual history of the sermons of Donne. The second inquiry falls into two parts: an examination of the evidence given by Donne himself in his letters, and by Walton in his *Life*, of Donne's method of preparing and delivering his sermons, and an examination of the sources of the text of those of his sermons which have survived.

I

§ 1. *Delivery and Transcription.*

Our knowledge of seventeenth-century sermons is chiefly derived from those that have survived in print, and of these there is no lack; eagerness of controversy within the Church and increased facilities for printing combined to swell the output of sermons from the press as the century went on, and it was not without reason that Hall, already in 1609, declared 'there is store of Sermons extant; the pulpit scarce affordeth more than the Presse',¹ and that Sanderson wrote, in 1655, 'After *these sermons* were preached [in the 1630's and 40's] . . . I could not observe any such scarcity of *printed sermons* abroad, as that there should be any great need of sending out more'.² But even while preaching and

¹ The Dedicatory preface to *Pharisaisme and Christianitie*, a sermon preached at Paul's Cross on 1 May 1608 and published in 1609.

² Preface to *XXI Sermons*. 'Hearing of the Word is grown into such request', said Andrewes (Southey, *Commonplace Book*, i. 343), 'as it hath got the start of all the rest of the parts of God's service.' I am grateful to Sir Charles Firth for supplying me with this reference and putting me on the track of several others.

lecturing were most frequent,¹ the sermons which reached the press can only have been an exceedingly small proportion of those delivered throughout the country. The largest number were no doubt preached on the one hand by country parsons and licensed lecturers, and on the other hand by unlicensed Puritans, whose 'prime engine' was preaching, and who held forth 'sometimes in the streets, sometimes in churches, sometimes in barns, and sometimes from pulpits, and sometimes from tubs'.² The business of the country parson, as is well brought out in Herbert's *Priest to the Temple*, was to edify an ignorant audience, and his chief instruments were the weekly sermon and catechizing. Neither he nor the inspired and tedious Puritan preachers can often have studied in advance the wording of their discourses, still less have committed them to paper. And it can only have been in exceptional circumstances, presently to be described, that sermons which were never committed to paper by their authors ever reached the press.

With sermons that were preached but never printed this paper is hardly concerned, still less with 'sermons' that were printed but never preached. A good example of the latter is to be found among the collected sermons of the famous 'silver-tongued' Henry Smith of St. Clement Dane's (8° 1594). The first 'sermon' in this collection purports to be an address delivered at a wedding ('You are come hither', it begins, 'to be contracted in the Lord'); but it is nearly three times the average length of the sermons in the collection; it is entitled 'A Preparative to Marriage'; it is provided with a list of 'The principall contents of this Treatise'; in short, it is a religious treatise disguised as a sermon and very slenderly

¹ 'An evil time indeed', said a loyal preacher, looking back on it, 'wherein there was never more *preaching*, and never fewer *sermons*' (Thomas Stephens, in his Dedicatory Epistle to *Three Sermons*, Cambridge 1661). After the Restoration, according to Wood (*Life and Times*, i. 297, 301), the number of sermons actually printed greatly increased, and the Puritans' 'practicall divinity and quaint discourses' went out of fashion.

² South, *Sermons*, iv. 54 (quoted in Southey's *Commonplace Book*, ii. 12).

connected with any spoken words. In his address 'To the Reader' at the beginning of the volume, Smith says, 'Because sicknesse hath restrained me from preaching, I am content to doe any good by writing', and it is not unlikely that he revised and altered one, or combined several, of his marriage addresses, into a treatise on the married state. Similarly, there is added to *Certaine Sermons preached before the Queenes Majestie* by Jewell (8° 1583) 'a short Treatise of the sacraments, gathered out of other his sermons, made upon that matter, in his cathedral Church at Salisburie'.¹

To pass from Elizabethan examples: in 1645 Downam published, without the author's leave, *A Body of Divinity*, which he attributed to Ussher, though it was Ussher's only in part; 'but', says Parr,² 'the Treatise at the end of this Book, Intituled *Immanuel*... is wholly my Lord Primate's... being the substance of divers sermons he had formerly preacht upon that subject'. In a somewhat similar manner Ussher's *A Method for Meditation or A Manuall of Divine Duties, fit for every Christians Practice*, 1651, is divided into six sections, each cast into the form of an address and headed by a quotation from scripture which is used as a text.³ So

¹ No doubt concocted by John Garbrande, the editor of this (posthumous) collection. It appears from Garbrande's dedicatory epistle (sig. ¶ iii) that Jewell always preached from very full notes if not from a written copy of his sermon: 'Albeit his giftes of reading, and understanding, and memorie were great, yet it appeareth he did seldome, or never deliver any exposition upon any piece of scripture, before any Congregation in the meanest parish in the countrie, but upon diligent studie, and whereof he drew his notes. . . . Hereby it is that these his Sermons preached before her Majestie, and at Paules crosse, come nowe to the reading of all such, before whome they were once spoken'.

² *Life of Ussher*, 1686, p. 62.

³ Ussher provides, indirectly, another example. '*The Life and Death of . . . Dr. James Usher . . . Published in a Sermon at his Funeral at the Abby of Westminster, Aprill 17, 1656 . . . And now re-issued with some other Enlargements.* By Nicholas Bernard, 1656', is something between a sermon and a book; it is 120 pages long, and begins and ends as does a sermon—no doubt as did the sermon preached at Ussher's funeral—but the insertions and expansions entirely rob it of its character as a sermon, and transform it into a formally rather awkward biography.

too Baxter enlarged an Assize sermon on Gal. vi. 16 'to a Treatize entituled, The Crucifying of the World by the Cross of Christ'.¹

Setting aside on the one hand the spoken sermon which never saw print and on the other the written homily which, if delivered at all, was so altered after delivery as to possess an entirely new character, we must turn to the sermon both preached and published as a sermon, and inquire how it fared between its composition and its appearance in print.

Nowadays, probably most sermons that are printed have been read from the pulpit. In the seventeenth century this was not so. A country preacher not gifted with fluency may have read from a manuscript, but not a preacher who aimed at distinction or even respectability in his art. The aim of such a preacher can be gathered from the boast of the 'young raw preacher' in Earle's *Microcosmographie*, 1628, whose commendation it was 'that he never looks upon book'. How rare it was for a preacher of distinction to read his sermons is evident from Walton's *Life* of Sanderson. According to Walton, Sanderson's 'learning, prudence, and piety were much noted and valued by the Bishop of his Diocese, and by most of the Nobility and Gentrey of that County [Leicestershire]. By the first of which he was often summon'd to preach many Visitation Sermons, and by the latter at many Assizes. Which Sermons, though they were much esteemed by them that procur'd and were fit to judge them; yet they were the less valued, because he read them, which he was forc'd to do; for though he had an extraordinary memory (even the Art of it) yet he had such an innate invincible fear and bashfulness, that his memory was wholly useless, as to the repetition of his Sermons as he had writ them, which gave occasion to say, when some of them were first printed and expos'd to censure (which was in the year 1632) that *the best Sermons that were ever read, were never preach'd*.'² To read a sermon,

¹ *Reliquiae*, p. 116.

² *Life*, 1678, sig. d 5. Later in the *Life* Walton tells a story of how Sanderson's friend Hammond persuaded him to attempt a sermon 'without book' and of the disastrous result: Sanderson swore 'that

then, was not to preach it, and he who depended upon his manuscript was, strictly speaking, 'no preacher'.¹

This account of Sanderson's practice is confirmed by Sanderson's *Sermons*,² throughout which passages are marked in the margin within inverted commas. These marks may well puzzle those who have not access to the *Advertisement to the Reader*, in which Sanderson very candidly says 'that in the delivery of these Sermons (because it was fit I should proportion my speech as neere as I could, to the houre) I was forced to cut off here and there part of what I had penned: which yet now, together with that which was spoken, I here present to thy view, distinguished from the rest with this note (") against the lines'.³ Apparently his manuscripts were in some way imperfect, for he adds that he has avoided 'either adding anything unto, or altering anything of that which I delivered...

neither you, nor any man living, shall ever persuade me to preach again without my Books'.

¹ Dr. Jessopp (*John Donne*, 1897, p. 137) writes, 'The reading of sermons was scarcely tolerated at this time; even in the university pulpit, where the practice was coming in, James I. had written a letter expressing his disapproval of it'. I can find no trace of this letter, and it is tempting to suppose that Dr. Jessopp had in mind James's Instructions to Preachers of 1622, which concerned the matter, not the manner, of their sermons, or the letter of Charles II referred to below.

² And by Aubrey, *Short Lives*, ii. 212, 'He alwayes read his sermons and lectures'.

³ I quote from the third edition, 4^o, 1637; the *Advertisement* seems to have been omitted in the folios, but the inverted commas in the margin of the text remain. It is noticeable that Sanderson must have known that he was writing more than he could deliver, for he often begins his excisions early in a sermon. A parallel is provided by Thomas Playfere, chaplain to James I, who says in the dedicatory epistle to his *Sick-Mans Couch* (in his *Whole Sermons*, 1623), a sermon preached at Greenwich in 1601, that he only 'altered' as much of his sermon 'as filled up the ordinary time of an hour: but that was scarce halfe the sermon'. He had not, like Sanderson, already written out the passages he omitted, for he says, 'I thought good in publishing this sermon rather to enlarge it to the comprehension I *had conceived in my minde* than to scant it according to that strict compasse of time which I was tied to in the pulpit'. I owe this reference to Mrs. Simpson, who has read through the proofs of this article and made several valuable suggestions.

as neere as the imperfection both of my Copies, and memory would permit'.

Sanderson, we gather from Walton, was almost the only distinguished preacher of his time who read his sermons. But the church did not maintain this high standard for long. 'Idleness', says Hacket,¹ 'is commonly the *English Gentleman's Disease*, and the Rural Curate's 'Scandal.' So far did this scandal prevail among the rural curates of the seventeenth century that 'rude unordained Dunces . . . thrust into our pulpits', and it was complained that the clergy were delivering up their position to their adversaries: they preached as little as they could, getting substitutes to take their places, and when they had to preach they read their sermons.² After the Restoration the matter aroused comment in the Universities, and an illuminating piece of evidence about university preaching after the Restoration is preserved by Wood. On the occasion of his famous visit to Oxford in September 1687,³ James II remarked as he left the Bodleian after his crowded but solitary feast, 'that he heard many of them used notes in their sermons, but none of his church ever did. He said that Dr. Dolben archbishop of York did read much of his sermon before the King his brother, after his restauration,⁴ which the king telling him of, he never after did, and therefore his preaching was well liked of.' Charles II had already reprimanded the Universities on this point. In October 1674 he had been so much offended by the carriage in the pulpit of a Cambridge preacher that he ordered Monmouth, the chancellor, to admonish the University, and Monmouth sent them a letter bidding them 'put the Statute in execution concerning decency in habit . . . and that they have their sermons memoriter'. A like command was promulgated in Oxford in November, and the *programma* issued by the vice-chancellor

¹ *Life of Williams*, Part I, §§ 40-1.

² 'A supine and slothful way of preaching that took its beginning with the late disorders' (Roberts, *S. Counties*, p. 228).

³ Wood, *Life and Times*, iii. 238 (MS. D 19 (3) ff. 81 sqq.).

⁴ This suggests a date some considerable time before 1683, when Dolben became Archbishop.

has been preserved by Wood.¹ It begins with a reference to the fashion of dress and hair enjoined by the Statutes (Tit. xiv. 1), and to the fact that, by Tit. viii. 6, they enact that the speeches of the participants in Disputations '*memoriter recitentur*'. Much more, it proceeds, should this practice be observed in sermons, '[quarum] conditio imprimis Oratoria est'; the results of neglecting it are that, '*Concionatoribus Llectioni incumbenibus, chartisque suis implicitis, Eloquentiae vires et gratiam haud parum frangi et debilitari*'. Reading of sermons was unheard of in antiquity, '*neque hodie usquam apud Exteros usitatus*';² therefore, '*ne... Morbus, Academiae sensim obrepens, tandem in Universam Ecclesiam demanaret*', in future, after six weeks have elapsed, if any has to preach a sermon '*coram Academicis*', whether in Latin or in English, '*Illam, more majorum, a principio ad finem memoriter recitare tenebitur; ita ut, vel non omnino, vel saltem perraro, nec nisi carptim, et stringente oculo, librum consulere opus habeat*'. The *programma* ends with a reference to this method as '*Antiquam et Laudabilem Universitatis Consuetudinem*' and a reminder to possible complainers³ that '*Natura Memoriam, saltem Modicam, nulli negavit*'.

¹ 276 A, no. 322; English translation MS. Tanner 338, f. 185. On some occasions, as Wood reminds us (*Life and Times, passim*), university sermons had to be read: five Easter sermons, preached by different preachers, were all 'repeated' in St. Mary's on Low Sunday. The repeater must have read these from written copies supplied by the preachers themselves. On 24 Nov. 1663 (Wood, 276 A, no. 321) the Pro-cancellarius had to remind Oxford University of the rule which enjoined that '*In Disputationibus Magistrorum, Baccalaureorum, Sophistarum, nulla neque Oratio, neque quaestionum Explicatio, a quoquam (Theologis, Jurisconsultis et Medicis exceptis) de scripto legatur, sub poena quinque solidorum*'.

² Perhaps an indication that Charles had not entirely misspent his travels abroad.

³ Apparently Charles's demands had been found too exacting in London: Bishop Patrick objected in 1671 to being made chaplain to the King on the ground that he found it 'very difficult to get a sermon without book', and a Dean excused himself from preaching before the King, 'saying he had not the gift of preaching, but the gift of government' (Hatton Correspondence, i. 61).

This is evidence not only of the state of preaching after the Restoration; it shows what standards had been set by the generation previous to the Civil War, and the contrast enables us to see exactly what was the practice whose desuetude was deplored by Charles II and his successor.

The approved method of preaching, then, in the first half of the century was to speak a sermon with as little dependence on manuscript as possible. Yet a sermon was not given *ex tempore*: the preacher when he entered the pulpit would have it in his head, and he might have copied it out in full. How fully it had been written out, and how minutely he knew what he was going to say, varied no doubt with circumstances and individuals.

One of the most assiduous, if not the most admired, of seventeenth-century preachers was Joseph Hall. During his twenty-two years at Waltham in Essex (1608–30) he preached, he tells us,¹ three times a week. Such frequency might have been excused him for sometimes preaching *ex tempore* or reading, without troubling to commit to memory, what he had written; ‘yet,’ he says, ‘never durst I climb into the Pulpit, to preach any Sermon, whereof I had not in my poor, and plain fashion, penned every word in the same Order, wherein I hoped to deliver it, although in the expression I listed not to be a slave to Syllables’.

Donne, writing in 1627,² recalls thus an incident in the reign of James I: ‘I remember I heard the old King say of a good sermon, that he thought the preacher never had thought of his sermon, till he spoke it; it seemed to him negligently and extemporally spoken. And I knew that he had weighed every syllable, for half a year before.’ The king’s remark proves that the preacher was not reading his sermon, Donne’s, that (whether he had committed it to writing or not) he was delivering something which he had, word-perfect, in his mind.

An account of the care taken in the preparation of his

¹ In his *Some Specialities in the Life of Jos. Hall*, in his *Remaining Works*, 1660, p. 26.

² To Ker; Gosse, ii. 245.

sermons by one of the most famous preachers of James I's day is to be found in the funeral sermon preached in 1626 for Andrewes by the Bishop of Ely, and may be taken as a model of the high standard set themselves by Jacobean preachers: 'He was always a diligent and painful preacher. Most of his solemn sermons he was most careful of, and exact. I dare say few of them but they passed his hand and were thrice revised before they were preached; and he ever disliked often and loose preaching, without study of antiquity, and he could be bold with himself and say, *when he preached twice a day at St. Giles's, he prated once*'.¹

In the degree of preparation which they gave to their sermons different preachers varied, and individual preachers were not consistent. Ussher's biographer² says, of a sermon delivered in 1601: 'He had reserved the notes of that Sermon, with the year and day he preached it; and, 'tis the more observable, it was one of the last he wrote throughout word for word, but afterwards (without writing anything but the heads) put his meditations wholly upon the strength of his memory, and Gods assistance of him'.³ Later in life, it seems, Ussher became more dependent on his manuscript, for Barnard tells us⁴ that he continued preacher to Lincoln's Inn 'till by the losse of his *sight*, that he could not read his Text'.⁵ This account is confirmed almost word for word by Parr, in his later *Life* of Ussher,⁶ who adds a description of his 'popular' preaching (with a Bible in the pulpit to which he referred, giving his audience time to check his references), and of his reluctance to print his sermons 'as wanting that polishing and exactness of style, which those that write, and supervise their own sermons are able to give them'. He had no time

¹ Quoted in Southey's *Commonplace Book*, i. 343.

² Barnard, *Life and Death of Ussher*, 1656, p. 39.

³ Barnard tells us (p. 46) that his practice with his Latin sermons and speeches was the same.

⁴ p. 101.

⁵ Yet the story told by Parr (*Life*, 1686, pp. 86-7) shows that, a year before his death, when he could not well see even his hour-glass, he was prevailed upon to preach, and did so *ex tempore*.

⁶ fol. 1686, pp. 85-6.

himself for the 'drudgery' of revision, and others could not well revise them for him, because he 'took his sermons in *Characters*'. 'Yet', says Parr, 'his discourses had that *Pathos* and natural vigor . . . which must needs be wanting in those that are read; nor yet does abound . . . in those, who speak their written Sermons without Book.'

This last phrase exactly describes the practice of the leading Jacobean divines on occasions of importance: they spoke their written sermons without book. (It is also exactly the method commended by Swift in his *Letter to a Young Clergyman*—but by Swift's day (he himself deploras it) the reading of sermons had become practically universal.) And where they had not copied out their sermon they would ordinarily have it clearly in their mind, and its 'heads' on paper. A 'copy' therefore (a misleading word, for it here denotes the manuscript of a sermon *before* its delivery), and notes, were the two forms in which the sort of sermon in question was likely to exist at the time of its delivery. So we read in an account of a meeting of the Chapter at Winchester on 26 Nov. 1629, by Dr. Young, the Dean:¹ 'I charged Dr. Moure, upon a letter receaved from my Lord our Bishop [Neile] to that purpose, in the Chaptour house before the companie to deliver the coppies ore notes of certaine sermons he hade preached in our cathedral church contrarie to the receaved customes of our Church. He denayed to give me anie notes, for coppies he had non; bot if he were so required he would send them to my Lord himself.' Dr. More was preaching in the ordinary course in his Cathedral, and he had, or plausibly said he had, no copy of his sermon. Had he been preaching on a more important occasion he would have been more likely to have a 'copy' instead of 'notes'.

Indeed, in certain circumstances, a copy would have been

¹ Young's *Diary*, ed. Goodman, 1928, p. 84. Cf. the provisions made to deal with heterodox University preachers in the Oxford Statutes (1638, Tit. xvi, § 9): 'Quod postulanti Vice-Cancellario, sive ejus Deputato, Concionis suae verum exemplar, eisdem terminis conscriptum virtute juramenti tradet; vel, si praetendit se Exemplar non habere, de iis de quibus suspectus vel delatus fuit directe virtute juramenti respondet'.

necessary. Among the Rawlinson MSS. is preserved a document which throws an interesting light on this very question at this very time. It is a formal note, signed by Laud,¹ written clearly in set terms, informing a preacher of the conditions in which he must preach at Paul's Cross in November 1629. It is interesting to observe that Donne preached at Paul's Cross on the preceding Sunday (22 Nov. 1629; *Fifty Sermons*, 1649, no. 44), and presumably received a notice in identical terms:

'You shall understand that you are appointed to preach at St. Paul's Crosse on Sunday the 29² of November next ensuing . . . These are therefore to require and charge you not to faile of your day appointed, and to send your answer of acceptance hereof in writing to my Chaplaine *Dr. Wykes* at London House, and to bring a Coppie of your Sermon with you, and not to exceed an houre and an halfe in both Sermon and Praier. As also to certifie your presence sometime on the Thursday before your day appointed to John Flemming Draper in Watling street at whose House your entertainment is provided.³ . . . Your lovinge Freind *Guil. London.*' Such a regulation as is implied by this document is not unlike that enforced now by the British Broadcasting Corporation, which demands from its speakers a written copy of their address, and the reason for the demand is probably the same in each case. Its importance is this: such a copy would have served no purpose if the authorities had not been able to depend upon its agreeing closely with the sermon delivered; we may therefore conclude that at that date it was natural and reasonable to expect a preacher to deliver *memoriter* a discourse which might last for an hour or more.

The evidence so far given has been drawn chiefly from practice, as revealed by preachers themselves or their biographers; a few contemporary precepts on this topic have survived, and they confirm it.

¹ D. 399, f. 115. I do not know if it has ever been printed.

² Words printed in italics seem to have been inserted into blanks left in the original. The signature is Laud's.

³ The 'Shunamite's House', cf. Walton's *Life of Hooker*.

There is an Elizabethan treatise on preaching, entitled *The Preacher, or Methode of preaching, wrytten in Latine by Nicholas Hemminge, and translated into Englishe by I[ohn] H[orsfall]* . . . 1574. This little book, which is characterized by the *naïveté* that marks Elizabethan sermons themselves, is chiefly devoted to the matter of sermons. The last section, however, is entitled *Of Memorie*, and inculcates two methods of learning a sermon by heart, one 'more artificiall', the other 'more rude, and rusticall'. Neither is much more than a *memoria technica* for remembering the heads of a sermon, and the preacher does not seem to be expected to be anything like word-perfect. But the 'rusticall' preacher, who is 'ignorant of artes', is recommended to 'wryte out his Sermone, and afterwarde according to the prescript rules . . . divide, and learne it by harte'.

The foregoing precepts were probably reflected in the practice of most Elizabethan preachers; of the more exacting standards set themselves by seventeenth-century divines examples have been given. These standards are set forth in a pamphlet published in Cambridge in 1655: *Officium Concionatoris. In quo Praecepta utilissima de inveniendâ habendaque Concione: Jam ante aliquot annos ex optimis quibusque autoribus collecta, et quam methodice disposita a praestanti Theologo, Eodemque Concionatore Celeberrimo*.¹ Who this 'famous preacher' of Cambridge was does not seem to be known; his advice is interesting. He gives six reasons to justify his injunction 'Summopere cavendum, ne unquam nisi summa urgeat necessitas extempore concionetur': *ex tempore* sermons, he says, 'vel supinam arguunt negligentiam, vel summam arrogantiam', and 'in auditoribus malevolis, odium, taedium et contemptum pariunt'. The minister must therefore carefully ponder his text, and jot down on paper, not trusting to his memory, his reflections

¹ 4°, Cambridge University Press, 1655. A second edition in 8° appeared in 1676. The *Methodus Concionandi* of William Chappell, Bishop of Cork, published anonymously in 1648 and again in English in 1656, says nothing of the method of composition or delivery of sermons, and deals only with matter and style.

upon it: 'Minister confuse notet in charta quae ductu Sp. Sancti et beneficio verbi Dei, imprimis textus praelecti in mentem veniunt, et ad doctrinam proponendam sunt necessaria: ne nimium memoriae fidat: Deus hac hora largitur quod non alia.'

When the preacher has completed his notes, he should write out his sermon in full: 'Absoluta meditatione confusa, attendatur ad methodicam dispositionem consignandam'; eight reasons are given why 'consignatio concionum a concionatore non est omittenda', most interesting of which are the following:

'Efficit ut conceptus sic designati altius expendantur, vel scil. a Concionatore solo vel cum aliis.

Cogitata firmitus memoriae imprimit.

Studiorum fructum Concionatori in posterum, aliisque incolumem praestat.'

The sermon having thus been written out, 'de eadem cum collegis suis (si quos habuerit) vel aliis piis communicet Concionator, eorumque censuram, iudicium et consilium expetat'; this should take place 'triduo . . . , vel biduo, vel pridie saltem ante habendam concionem, ut errata corrigantur, &c.'

After discussing the matter and arrangement of the sermon, at great length and with many complications, sub-headings, and divisions, the writer turns to its actual delivery. He insists that the sermon must be memorized, not read: 'Cogitationes non sunt ex scripto legendae; lectio enim actionis libertatem et concinnitatem plurimum impedit, atque ideo prima cura sit Concionem fideliter memoriae imprimere, ut confidenter et audacter in publico proferatur'. To read out a sermon already written out is not always possible, 'quoniam, non omnes bene scribunt, nec omnibus est oculorum acumen', and because sermons have often to be delivered '1. Ex tempore.¹ 2. Loco caliginoso. 3. In castris'; nor is it profitable, either for the preacher or for his audience: the preacher is unable to improve an unexpected occasion, his memory is not exercised and his action suffers, his audience will be less attentive, and

¹ Presumably under the stress of the *summa necessitas* referred to above.

will say that they could do better themselves ('Dicent se quoque ita concionaturos'). Finally, it will not be necessary to read a sermon if certain hints about memorizing it are observed.

On the other hand, it is not recommended that sermons should be learned word for word by heart. The labour is too great in view of the amount to be learned,¹ and demands a memory such as few enjoy, and the result of straining after verbal exactness will be that the delivery is spoilt, and, 'si vel in uno verbo impingant, concio turbatur, memoria confunditur, et periculum est ut in toto hallucinentur'. Nevertheless, 'Expêdit . . . initio duas vel tres Conciones de verbo ad verbum ediscere; postea cum exercitatio aliqua accesserit, nec de verbo ad verbum scribendae sunt, nec ediscendae'.

The next section contains notes intended to help those whose memory is weak, the ninth of which is as follows: 'Si ista omnia non sufficiant, summa Concionis capita chartula notentur, quae sub libro recondatur, ita ut illius interdum adminiculo uti possimus, donec tandem memoriae robur adolescat, et concionandi libertas'.

The pamphlet ends with a few directions about the private duties of a minister, one of which is that he should keep the written copies of the sermons 'in suum et aliorum usum futurum'.

§ 2. *Publication.*

When sermons were printed in the seventeenth century, it was usually under one of two conditions: either soon after their delivery, or when a considerable interval had elapsed and the author was collecting his sermons. We will take these two possibilities in turn.

If a preacher went (for instance) to Paul's Cross intending, or knowing that he would be called upon, to print his sermon, and knowing that he had to bring with him a written copy, it was natural that he should hand that copy directly to the printer. The probability that preachers did so is in some

¹ An hour is the length suggested (p. 16): 'Tota dispositio Concionis sic informetur, ut Concio fiat brevis et quae horae spatium non excedat.'

degree confirmed by the circumstances in which appeared sermons preached and printed by command of the king or the House of Commons. The *Imprimatur* in such sermons is usually dated within a day or so of the day on which the sermon was delivered, if not on that day itself. It is unlikely that in that short interval a preacher would rewrite a sermon of which he had a written copy (particularly if when he wrote that copy he contemplated the publication of the sermon). A fair copy, on the other hand, had to be made after delivery when a sermon was being prepared for press which existed at the time only in notes, or in an abbreviated form only intelligible to its author, even if only a very short interval elapsed between its delivery and its publication. Even when a sermon was printed soon after its delivery and a fair and full written copy already existed, the possibility of a second written copy cannot be eliminated. Hall, as has been seen, wrote out his parish sermons before delivering them, and on solemn occasions he is all the more likely to have put his discourse on to paper beforehand. Yet he speaks in a dedication of 'this poore Sermon both preached and penned at your motion',¹ and on another occasion he says 'I have caused my thoughts so neer as I could, to goe back to the very tearms wherein I expressed them, as thinking it better to fetch those words I have let fall, than to follow those I must take up'.² The last remark ('those words . . . I must take up') clearly implies a written copy on which the sermon delivered was based, as well as the fair copy for the press.

When a long interval elapsed between delivery and publication, the matter might be complicated in several ways. To begin with, the author was dependent on a written copy, for he could not remember what he had said. He might possess a full copy, written by himself either before or after delivery, or mere notes for the sermon; he might have lost his own copies, and he might be able to discover copies written by others.

¹ To the Countess of Exeter; preached 1623; *Works*, 1647, p. 479.

² Dedication to *A Holy Panegyricke*, preached at Paul's Cross, 24 March 1613, *Works*, 1647, p. 431.

As long as he had copies of his own his only problem would be how to fit them for the press. If a fair copy had been made after delivery no substantial alteration would usually be needed; if the written copy had been made before delivery, a certain amount of revision would probably be desirable, if not necessary. So Baxter¹ published 'some plain Sermons . . . which Mr. Baldwin (an honest young Minister that had lived in my House, and learnt my proper characters, or Shorthand, in which I wrote my Sermon Notes) had transcribed out of my Notes. And though I had no leisure, for this or other Writings, to take much care of the stile, . . . I thought it might better pass as it was, than not at all.'

Sanderson's preface to his *XXI Sermons* (1655) shows clearly the position in which a preacher anxious to publish a collection might find himself. We know that Sanderson wrote out his sermons in full; yet they were not apparently ready for the press, for he says that '*the copying out* of most of them again . . . was to be done, ere *the work* could be fitted for the Press, and could not well be done by any other *hand* than *my own* . . .' Further, his own copies were scattered and incomplete: 'when . . . I came to seek up my *scattered Copies*, which lay *neglected* (so little did I value them) some in one corner, some in another: of the *Two and Twenty*, which I intended to publish . . . after the best search I could make, I fell short *Five* of my whole Number . . . and a sixth was before fallen into the hands of another; who would not be persuaded to part with his *Copy* (as he calleth it) either to me upon entreaty . . . or to his *fellow-Stationer* upon any reasonable . . . terms.' For this sermon, therefore, Sanderson 'made a shift by the help of my *memory* to make up (as near as it would serve me, to what I had so *long since* spoken) out of an old *Copy of a Sermon* formerly preached upon *the same text* elsewhere.'

Sanderson had one other resource which must have usually been open to his contemporaries—copies made by or for his

¹ *Reliquiae*, p. 114.

friends.¹ Copies of two missing sermons, he says, 'it was my good hap, searching purposely' among the papers of his friend Thomas Harrington, 'there to find, together with *the Copies* of divers others which I wanted not, transcribed with his own hand'. Some of Hooker's sermons were saved in much the same way: his controversy with Travers, we read in Walton, was 'the cause of his Transcribing those few of his Sermons, which we now see printed with his books . . . by their Transcription they fell into such hands as have preserved them from being lost'.²

The copying and circulation of sermons in manuscript, however, was not as frequent as that of poems. Nor is this surprising. The public which listened to sermons may have been larger than the public which read poetry, but the poetry-reading public must have been far larger than the public which had the opportunity and the inclination to read sermons in manuscript. Moreover, a poem was usually short; it was not difficult to memorize, and it was easy to copy, and the multiplication of poems in commonplace books naturally proceeded apace and the multiplication of copies of sermons lagged far behind it.

None the less, sermons were copied and handed round in manuscript; both collections of individual authors (examples will be given below) and anthologies were made; among the 'MSS. in Dr. Thomas Barlow's library in Queen's Coll.' mentioned by Wood in 1692³ is 'the copie of divers modern sermons preached by eminent divines of the church of England', and such collections are to be found among the manuscripts in the Bodleian and British Museum libraries. In prefaces to printed sermons it is not surprising to find fairly often the plea that the author printed them because the labour

¹ There is a hint of this in the passage quoted above from Walton, where it is said that his sermons were admired 'by them that procured them'.

² At the end of Walton's *Life* of Sanderson, 1678, is printed 'A Sermon of Richard Hooker . . . found in the Study of the late Learned Bishop Andrews'.

³ *Life and Times*, ii. 174-5.

of transcribing them for friends who wanted copies was too great.

More often the excuse is one common in published volumes of poetry—that the multiplication of false copies has driven the author to publish his own text in self-defence. The following is a typical example: ‘That which drew these sermons from mee, next to thy good, was to right my selfe. They were first preached eight yeares since; and some notes thereof were, (to say no more), dispersed into the hands of many, to my prejudice. They are here presented as they were preached, with little alteration or addition, in method, style or matter.’¹

‘Some notes’ in this passage is pretty certainly a reference to the habit of note-taking, usually in shorthand, during the delivery of a sermon. This might be done by people of several different sorts. Usually the note-taker was a particularly zealous auditor: among the Puritans the practice was so common that, according to Wood, one of the objects of those who came into power in Oxford at the Restoration was ‘to make the taking of notes after the preacher ridiculous’,² and scorn is poured upon it in a squib upon the expenditure of the Committee of Safety during the Commonwealth, where money is supposed to have been disbursed ‘for a silver ink-horn, and ten gilt-paper books . . . to write in at Church’.³ The object of ridicule here was undue zeal; in Earle’s *Microcosmographie* ridicule is directed on the note-taker who wanted the sermon for his own professional use; of the ‘young raw Preacher’ it is said that ‘His collections of study are the notes of sermons, which taken up at St. Mary’s,

¹ Thomas Goodwin, ‘To the Reader’, in *A Childe of Light walking in darkness*, 1636.

² *Life and Times*, i. 356 (MS. F 31, f. 10); he adds (f. 11; *Life and Times*, i. 359) ‘and not to be any way advantageous to the present mode of preaching’.

³ Harleian Miscellany, vii. 149 (quoted in Southey’s *Commonplace Book*, ii. 106). A vivid picture of Puritan note-taking is given in John Phillips’s *Satyr against Hypocrites*, quoted by Mrs. Simpson, *Study of the Prose Works of John Donne*, p. 269.

he utters in the country: And if he write Brachigraphy his stock is so much the better'.

The growth of this habit was naturally a threat to the purity of the text of sermons, for it led to the multiplication, and might lead to the printing, of false copies, and in prefaces such as Goodwin's, quoted above, the author sometimes justified himself by a specific reference to the unscrupulous 'short-hand-man'. Probably this danger was not serious till the latter part of the century; an excellent example of its results is Outram's *Twenty Sermons*, published posthumously in 1682.¹ The editor of this collection tells the reader that the sermons would not have been published 'had not a forward *Bookseller*, only to serve the ends of his own *profit*, thrust out into the World Six Sermons under his name, not many Months after his Death. To promote the Sale of which, he endeavours . . . to make the *Reader* believe that although (as he confesses) they were taken from the *Author* by a short-hand-man many years since, yet *they were allowed and corrected by himself; that they were agreeable to his sense; And that there was no other more perfect Copy to be procured*'. Even if this were true, the editor proceeds to ask, 'What *right* had the *Bookseller*, and his *Short-hand Friend* by this to publish them in the name of this *Author*? Did the *Author* correct them for the Press?', and to point out that the text abounded in errors and even ran two sermons into one.

Shorthand copies, however, were not necessarily unauthorized. The preacher might wish, for reasons of his own, to have a *verbatim* report of what he said, and a text printed from such an authorized copy would be the purest that it is possible to obtain. So in *The Lawful Preacher* by John Ferriby, 1661, a treatise against unlicensed preaching, the author recounts in his Epistle to the Reader how, in the

¹ Parr (*Life of Ussher*, 1686, p. 69), provides an earlier example; he says, of a sermon preached before Charles I on 19 Nov. 1648, 'which because it then was the occasion of a great deal of discourse, I shall give you the heads of it, being there present at that sermon; which afterwards was published (though very imperfectly) by some that took Notes'.

course, of controversy, he offered to satisfy his opponents 'either by a private communication, or a publike printing of my Notes'. This offer seems to have been refused, and at his next lecture he 'bespoke a Notary to prevent present mistakes, and after-misreports'. It is upon the notary's report that *The Lawfull Preacher* is based.¹

To summarize: the possible foundations for the printed text of a seventeenth-century sermon are various: the author's rough notes, the copy he wrote before delivery, a fair copy subsequently 'exscribed', copies made later by or for friends, or unauthorized copies of these copies, and finally *verbatim* transcripts of the spoken word made with or without the preacher's authorization. The degree of revision which such MSS. underwent must also have varied with individual authors and with the circumstances of publication. To discover the history of any sermon or collection before its publication attention must be paid to what is known of the author's method of delivery and of the circumstances in which the surviving text or texts came to be printed. The rest of this paper is devoted to investigating Donne's sermons with these two objects in view.

II

§ 1. *Delivery and Transcription.*

According to Walton, Donne preached 'once a week, if not oftner'. His congregations varied widely. Sometimes he preached to village auditories on the outskirts of London, sometimes to the Court, sometimes as Dean in his Cathedral of St. Paul's, sometimes, as Reader, to a select body at Lincoln's Inn, sometimes to his London parish of St. Dunstan's. His methods of composition and delivery no doubt varied

¹ Early examples of shorthand notes are to be found among the sermons of Henry Smith already mentioned, four of which, printed in 1590 and 1591, were described as 'taken by Characterie'. Apparently this was under the preacher's authorization, for the second issue of one of the sermons was 'taken by Characterie and examined after', and the third 'newly examined and corrected by the author' (see Mrs. Simpson's *Study of the Prose Works of John Donne*, pp. 268-9).

with the circumstances in which he preached. But they varied within limits: there is no evidence, and no reason to suppose, that Donne ever on the one hand read a sermon or on the other preached quite *ex tempore*.

Donne's usual practice is described by Walton as follows: 'As he usually preached once a week, if not oftner, so after his sermon he never gave his eyes rest, till he had chosen out a new Text, and that night cast his Sermon into a form, and his Text into divisions; and the next day betook himself to consult the Fathers, and so commit his meditations to his memory, which was excellent. But upon Saturday he usually gave his mind a rest from the weary burthen of his weeks meditation, and usually spent that day in visitation of friends, or some other diversion of his thoughts.'¹

For practically every sermon that Donne preached, therefore, he must have made notes, most of which no doubt (even if he kept them) he never fully copied out. Yet even when he preached from notes the sermon was usually, if not always, complete in his mind before he delivered it, so that only an effort of memory was needed for him to copy it out later, provided that the interval was not too long. Of a sermon recently delivered he wrote to a friend,² 'I will pretermit no time to write it; though in good faith I have half forgot it'. A letter to Sir Thomas Roe, dated 1 Dec. 1622,³ provides another example of a sermon written after delivery: 'I would I could also⁴ send your Lordship a copy of that, but that one, which also by commandment I did write after the preaching, is as yet in his Majesty's hand, and I know not whether he will in it, as he did in the other, after his reading thereof, command it to be printed; and whilst it is in that suspense, I know your Lordship would call it indiscretion to send out

¹ *Lives*, 1675, p. 59. This is confirmed by Donne's letter to Mrs. Cokain (May 1628; Gosse, ii. 256): 'If I might have forborn this letter till tomorrow, I could have had time enough to enlarge myself, for Saturday is my day of conversation and liberty. But I am now upon Friday evening, and not got through my preparation for my Paul's service upon Sunday.'

² Gosse, ii. 151.

³ Gosse, ii. 173-5.

⁴ Donne has already mentioned a printed sermon.

any copy thereof; neither truly am I able to commit that fault, for I have no copy.¹

The fact that a copy was made 'after preaching', however, does not mean that no copy existed before delivery, nor does the existence of a previous copy preclude a copy 'after preaching'. This may be shown by studying an incident in which both Donne and Laud played a part, and which may have led to Laud's command in 1629 that for sermons preached at Paul's Cross a copy had to be made before the sermon was preached.

On 1 April 1627, Donne preached before the King at Whitehall (*Fifty Sermons*, 1649, no. 27). It was at this time that the High Church and the Puritan parties had been coming to blows over Montague's *Appello Caesarem*, and certain passages in Donne's sermon seemed to Charles and Laud to resemble too closely the Puritanic view put forward in a sermon recently preached by Archbishop Abbot, Montague's chief opponent. The King asked for a copy of Donne's sermon. Donne immediately wrote to his friend Sir Robert Ker: 'Sir, A few hours after I had the honour of your letter, I had another from my Lord of Bath and Wells, commanding from the King a copy of my sermon. I am in preparations of that, with diligence, yet this morning I waited upon his Lordship, and laid up in him this truth, that of the Bishop of Canterbury's sermon, to this hour, I never heard syllable, nor what way, nor upon what points he went. And for mine, it was put upon that very order, in which I delivered it, more than two months since.'² The last sentence proves as clearly as can be that the sermon was written out beforehand in the exact form in which it was delivered; yet Donne was, when he wrote, engaged in making a fresh copy, to which he again refers in a letter addressed to Ker shortly afterwards, in which he says, 'I have now put

¹ In the letter previously quoted we get a hint of more frequent copying: 'I send you a copy of [a] sermon, but it is not my copy, which I thought my Lord of Southampton would have sent me back. This you must be pleased to let me have again, for I borrow it.'

² Gosse, ii. 244.

into my Lord of Bath and Wells' hands the sermon faithfully exscribed'.¹ The 'exscribed' copy must, then, have been a fair copy of the already existing MS. It is not surprising that a fresh copy was needed: the sermon might originally have been written into a book, and we have already seen that preachers used their own abbreviations, so that even their full copies had to be written out again for the press.

Donne, however, did not only transcribe his sermons when commanded by authority, or at the request of friends. During the autumn of 1625, with many other Londoners, he was forced by the plague to retire into the country, and he spent some months in the house of Sir John Danvers in Chelsea. From there he wrote in November to an unnamed correspondent: '... this summer in my close imprisonment ... I have revised as many of my sermons as I had kept any note of, and I have written out a great many, and hope to do more. I am already come to the number of eighty ...'² Here Donne seems to imply two processes: (1) 'revising', which must mean practically writing anew, sermons of which his notes survived; (2) 'writing out' those of which he had copies—that 'exscription' from a full MS. copy of which evidence has already been given.

Of the former process, 'revising' notes, we have an example in *LXXX Sermons*, 1640, nos. 71 and 72. At the head of the former sermon is the following note: 'At the *Haghe* Decemb. 19, 1619, I Preached upon this Text. Since in my sicknesse at *Abrey hatche* in Essex, 1630, revising my short notes of that Sermon, I digested them into these two.' In the two sermons which follow the sermon form is strictly

¹ Gosse, ii. 244. The letter opens: 'I was this morning at your door, somewhat early; and I am put into such a distaste of my last sermon, as that I dare not practice any part of it, and therefore, though I said then that we are bound to speak aloud, though we awaken men, and make them froward, yet after two or three modest knocks at the door, I went away.' This reproduces very closely the text of the sermon (*Fifty Sermons*, p. 230 c-d): 'doctrine that may be spoke aloud, though it awake them, that sleepe in their sinne, and make them the more froward, for being so awaked'.

² Gosse, ii. 225.

observed (for instance, Donne remarks 'we shall best come to our end (which is your edification) by these steps'), yet he cannot be reproducing more than the outline of a discourse which he had delivered ten years before.

How far in 'exscribing' sermons from full copies he diverged from the text he found in front of him is a more difficult question, which depends for its answer on a study of the texts presently to be described.

Such was the genesis of the text of Donne's sermons. Six were printed during his lifetime, and as many more in 1634; the rest lay hidden among papers which presumably consisted of notes, original copies, and 'exscribed' copies such as he mentions in the letters already quoted. It remains to be seen how these papers fared after his death.

The first evidence on this point is that of his literary executor Henry King:¹ 'Dr. Donne . . . not only trusted me as his Executor, but three days before his death delivered into my hands those excellent Sermons of his now made [make 1675] publick: professing before Dr. Winniff, Dr. Monford, and I think, yourself then present at his bed side, that it was by my restless importunity, that he had prepared them for the Press; together with which (as his best Legacy) he gave me all his Sermon-Notes, and his other Papers, containing an Extract of near Fifteen hundred Authors. How these were got out of my hands, you, who were the Messenger for them, and how lost both to me and yourself, is not now seasonable to complain.' Apparently the papers, *via* Walton, reached the younger Donne who seems to have profited from them in two ways: by preaching them and by printing them.

That he preached them, or intended to preach them, is proved by a letter from him which accompanied a presentation copy of *Biatkanatos*,² in which he says: 'I was encouraged to undertake [the printing of *LXXX Sermons*] by the learnedest men in

¹ Walton's *Life*, 1675, p. 2, in a letter to Walton dated 1664.

² In the University Library at Cambridge. The letter is printed in Zouche's edition of Walton's *Lives*, and in Keynes' *Bibliography of Donne*, pp. 62-3.

the kingdome, of all professions, and was often told, that I should deserve better by doing soe, than by keeping them to my owne use, for by this meanes, I did not only preach to the present age, but to our childrens children.'¹

Donne profited not only by preaching, but also by publishing, his father's sermons, which he did in folio collections in 1640, 1649,² and 1660/1, and in the prefaces to each of these volumes, and most clearly in the last, he explained the material inducements from persons in authority which persuaded him to publish them. That the publication of *XXVI* did not exhaust the stock of MS. sermons in Donne's possession is perhaps the meaning of his *Postscript* (sig. B2): 'By the Dates of these *Sermons*, the reader may easily collect, that although they are the last that are published, they were the first that were preached; and I did purposely select these from among all the rest, for, being to finish this Monument, which I was to erect to his Memory I ought to reserve those materials that were set forth with the best Polish.' It will be noticed that *XXVI* contains, besides *Deaths Duell* and one sermon (no. 22), the date of which is doubtful, only five sermons preached after Donne became Dean of St. Paul's. The rest all belong to the first half-dozen years of his ministry. The *Postscript* may mean that a considerable number of later sermons, enough to fill a volume, which the younger

¹ It seems that the folios themselves were expected by their editor to be used by preachers; he writes, in the Foreword to *XXVI Sermons*, 1660/1, in gratitude to 'our most Honorable Lord Chancellor' for his bounty in the matter of *Fifty Sermons*, 1649, that he 'is not only content that the Churches should be furnished with good *Preachers*, but that those *Preachers* should have good *Sermons*'. The suggestion is borne out by a sentence a little farther on: 'A better method (I confess) might have been observed in their Publication [Donne presumably refers to the smallness of the impression, which consisted of only 500 copies]; whereby those that are called to service of private *Churches*, and have not the convenience of *Publick Libraries*, might have made more use of them.'

² The collection of 1649 was entered at the Stationers' Hall at the same time as that of 1640: see the letter quoted above printed in Keynes, pp. 62-3; the entries were printed by Mrs. Simpson, *Study of the Prose Works of John Donne*, p. 257.

Donne intended to publish, but never did. On the other hand, if 'ought' is a preterite, the whole sentence means that the early sermons were reserved for the last volume, as being themselves the most polished; and Donne is saying that in 1640 he 'selected' the sermons, which to 'finish' his 'monument', he published in 1661.

The history of these papers is best wound up by an extract from the will of the younger Donne,¹ which shows that on his death they returned into the hands for which his father had originally intended them: 'To Mr. *Isaac Walton*, I give all my Writings under my Father's hand, which may be of some use to his Son, if he makes him a Scholar. To the Reverend Bishop of *Chichester*, I return that *Cabinet* [that] was my Fathers, now in my Dining-Room, and all those Papers which are of *Authors Analysed* by my Father; many of which he hath already received with his *Common-Place-Book*, which I desire may pass to Mr. *Walton's* Son, as being more likely to have use for such a help, when his age shall require it . . .'

§ 2. *The surviving texts.*

Practically all Donne's surviving sermons are contained in the three folios edited by his son: *LXXX Sermons*, 1640, *Fifty Sermons*, 1649, and *XXVI Sermons*, 1660/1. These volumes contain 154 sermons; not 156, because *XXVI Sermons* prints two sermons twice over.

All the sermons contained in *LXXX*, *Fifty Sermons*, and *XXVI* (as the folios will henceforth be called in this paper) were there printed for the first time except six sermons in *Fifty Sermons* (which had already appeared, a few years after Donne's death, as *Six sermons upon severall occasions, preached before the King and elsewhere . . . Printed by the Printers to the Universitie of Cambridge . . .* 1634) and two sermons in *XXVI*: the famous *Deaths Duell*, which was first printed a year or so after it was preached, in 1632, and Donne's *Sermon*

¹ A printed broadside of the will is preserved in the Bodleian, Wood 276A, no. 284. It was dated 21 July 1657, witnessed 2 Nov. 1661, and printed 23 Feb. 1662, the year of Donne's death.

of *Valediction*, preached at Lincoln's Inn in 1619, which appeared in a volume entitled *Supientia Clamitans*, consisting of three sermons falsely attributed to one William Milbourne, in 1638.

Besides the sermons contained in the folios, a few sermons were printed in Donne's lifetime, most of which were issued more than once, both singly and bound together with a general title-page:¹ first, a sermon on Judges v. 20, thrice issued in 1622;² second, a sermon on Acts i. 8 (1622); third, a sermon, preached at the dedication of the new chapel at Lincoln's Inn, and published under the title *Encaenia* in 1623; fourth, *The first sermon preached to King Charles*, 1625; fifth, *A sermon, preached to the King's Mtie. at Whitehall*, 1626; sixth, *A Sermon of commemoration of the Lady Danvers*, 1627. None of these sermons were reprinted in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries; the first, second, and sixth were reprinted for the first time by Alford when he attempted a collection of Donne's 'Works' in 1839; the rest he omitted.³

The seventeenth century, then, saw exactly 160 of Donne's sermons in print, and ten of these printed twice over (the two twice printed in *XXVI*, the Six Sermons reprinted in *Fifty Sermons*, *Deaths Duell*, and the *Valediction* sermon).

For ten sermons the modern editor can compare two printed texts: what manuscript resources has he to add to these? One or two MSS. were known to scholars of the last century. Payne Collier wrote in 1831:⁴ 'I have a MS. containing seventeen original sonnets, entitled *Devine Meditations*, by Mr. Alabaster . . . The main body of the MS. consists of sermons by Dr. Donne, Dr. King, etc.: at the end is a collection of miscellaneous poems, chiefly upon sacred

¹ For details concerning their publication, see Keynes' *Bibliography of Donne*, pp. 21-6.

² On the title-page of each of the first two issues the text is mistakenly given as Judges xx. 15.

³ The sixth was also reprinted in 1840 in Pickering's edition of Donne's *Devotions*. The sermon on Acts i. 8 was reprinted by Mr. Keynes in *X Sermons by John Donne*, Nonesuch Press, 1923.

⁴ *Hist. of English Dramatic Poetry*, ii. 431-4, n.

subjects, collected in the reign of James I.' In 1843 Hannah had this MS. in his custody, by the kindness of Payne Collier, and further recorded that it was a folio and that it contained 'several of Donne's MS. Sermons, along with other valuable relics, and amongst them a Sermon by Dr. John King, "preached before y^e Kinges Maiestye" on Ps. ii. 10, 11, 12'.¹

Another MS. collection containing sermons by Donne seems² to be referred to by Chalmers, in his *General Biographical Dictionary*:³ 'We are informed by a valuable correspondent . . . that the rev. W. Woolston, of Adderbury, is in possession of a large folio MS. of sermons, many of which are by Donne, and some of these perhaps not published. The MS., which appears to be of the date of Dr. Donne's time, shows at least the value placed on his works, in the care and pains then used to make accurate transcripts, or to procure copies of them.'

These MSS. were apparently commonplace books, not primarily collections of Donne's sermons; and in a similar commonplace collection in the Bodleian a sermon by Donne is preserved: MS. Ashmole 781 opens with a transcript of the Valediction sermon already referred to.

A collection, devoted, unlike these, mainly to Donne's sermons, was purchased at the sale of Professor Edward Dowden's library in 1913 by Mr. Wilfrid Merton. It contains nine sermons, eight of which are by Donne; one of these was not published till Mr. Merton issued privately in 1921 fifty copies of a facsimile of it,⁴ which reveals that the MS. was neatly written between ruled margins by a professional scribe. I have called this the 'Dowden MS.'

[Since this article was in type, I have learned that the

¹ Hannah's edition of Bp. Henry King's *Poems*, 1843, xxx, n., xci.

² Chalmers's 'valuable correspondent' does not describe the MS. closely enough for it to be possible to state definitely that it is not identical with Payne Collier's.

³ 1813, xii, 260, n.; referred to by Tomlins in his edition of Walton's *Lives* [1652], 121, n.

⁴ It has since been reprinted by Mrs. Simpson, *Study of the Prose Works of John Donne*, pp. 321-39.

Payne Collier MS. is in Mr. Merton's possession, as well as the Dowden MS. An investigation of the contents of these two collections would be one of the most important tasks of any scholar wishing to follow up the hints thrown out in this article.]

Another MS. has recently come to light after an interesting history. This MS., according to a note inside its front cover, in Jessopp's hand, was given in 1855 to Dr. Augustus Jessopp by David Laing, the antiquary, who had bought it 'at a sale in London'—perhaps the sale of the owner who wrote on a fly-leaf the inscription: 'Frs. Watts Linc. Inn 1820.' This inscription is the earliest sign of ownership in the MS. In 1898 Dr. Jessopp, after detaching a fly-leaf¹ containing several MS. notes written in the same hand as the body of the MS., presented the book to the ninth Marquess of Lothian, thinking that it was fitting that it should pass to a descendant of one of Donne's best friends, and feeling that in the Bodleian or the British Museum it 'would be practically lost sight of'.² The MS. has now been brought to light, and through the courtesy of the present Marquess it is possible for the first time to publish a description of it.

The MS., which seems to have been re-bound early in the last century, contains (apart from fly-leaves introduced in re-binding) 205 leaves, measuring $7\frac{1}{2}$ by $5\frac{7}{8}$ inches. Of the first of these leaves only traces remain: presumably it was the leaf of desultory notes detached by Jessopp, which may be reckoned as folio 1 of the MS. The rest of the MS., with the exception of a few blank leaves, is occupied by sermons which Jessopp believed to be written in Donne's hand. A note by Jessopp on the front cover of the MS. states that it contains eighteen sermons 'hitherto unknown' and that 'the others have been already printed', and a pencilled index in Jessopp's hand at the end of the volume represents it as containing twenty-four sermons altogether. The total number of sermons is

¹ To which he attached an account of its origin; the leaf is now in the possession of Mr. Geoffrey Keynes.

² From a note in the handwriting of the ninth Marquess of Lothian which accompanies the MS.

in fact thirty-nine, and of these eight have been already published as Donne's (one of them having been privately printed since Jessopp's day).¹

The contents of the volume may be divided into four sections:

(1) f. 2 blank; ff. 3-57 nine sermons (including all the previously published sermons) closely and neatly written, most of them dated at the end with various dates in the year 1624.

(2) ff. 58-101 nine sermons, not so neatly or closely written, in a larger hand and darker ink than the first section; ff. 102-6 blank.

(3) ff. 107-72 fourteen sermons, presenting an appearance similar to that of those contained in section 1; f. 173 blank.

(4) ff. 174-203 seven sermons, presenting an appearance similar to that of those contained in the second section, save that the writing is less neat and larger. The paper becomes bad in this section and the writing in consequence more difficult to decipher; ff. 204-5 blank.

The MS. is clearly written; in the first and third sections there is hardly an erasure; throughout there is a wide margin, which accommodates references and a few *inserenda*.² The number of lines to a page in sections 1 and 3 averages about 45, the number of words to a line about 16; on sections 2 and 4 the average number of lines is about 35, of words about 12; in each pair of sections the writing gets progressively larger, and the number of lines to a page and words to a line in consequence decreases. In section 1 the margin of the left-hand page is an outer, in the other sections an inner,

¹ From Mr. Merton's Dowden MS., *v. sup.* Jessopp's mistake about the total number was due, as his index reveals, to his having counted two or three series of sermons, each on the same text, as single sermons. Yet even in this he was not quite consistent, for he numbered separately two sermons which were on the same text and clearly interdependent.

² In the margin at the head of several sermons are practically indecipherable marks in a hand apparently different from that in which the MS. is written; if they could be explained, they might provide a clue to the origin or early history of the MS.

margin. In section 1, too, every sermon starts on a right-hand page, and if a sermon ends on a left-hand page the leaf intervening between it and the next sermon is left blank; these conditions are not observed scrupulously throughout the rest of the volume. The last sermon breaks off abruptly; and section 2 contains besides complete sermons, an unfinished sermon, and jottings for a sermon; and between some sermons in sections 2, 3, and 4, leaves are left blank. In spite of a good deal of variety in the appearance of different portions of the book, it is quite clear on a close examination that the whole MS. is in the same hand, and that the differences are due simply to the different conditions in which the different sections were written.

At the moment of writing, two questions have not been settled by experts: in whose hand the MS. is written, and who is the author of the sermons that are not known to be Donne's. Jessopp's assumption that the MS. was written entirely in Donne's hand is natural: the hand resembles Donne's, eight of the first nine sermons are known to be by him, and to most of these nine sermons are appended dates (evidently the dates of their transcription) in 1624, and we know Donne to have been engaged in copying out his sermons in 1625. Nevertheless a comparison of the MS. with letters known to be in Donne's hand seems conclusive against its being in his autograph.

If this is so, it is unlikely that the sermons in the three concluding sections of the MS. are his (though there might be exceptions to this generalization) since it seems pretty clear that some at least of the later sermons were transcribed by their author.¹ This is on the whole confirmed by the style and matter of the later sermons, which are unlike Donne's and fall very much below his standard of eloquence and argument. On the other hand the first sermon, standing

¹ E. g., on f. 194^{vo} two alternative readings are given, 'I p^oceive by ye time I must onely' being written above 'I purpose now onely'. And, as has been said, sections 2 and 4 contain jottings for sermons and unfinished sermons, whereas section 1 clearly and section 3 apparently, consist of careful fair copies.

as it does at the head of a section containing eight sermons which are acknowledged to be Donne's, is clearly his,¹ so that the MS. at least provides one new sermon from his pen. The authorship of the last thirty sermons need not here be inquired into—even if they are Donne's, the Lothian MS. is the sole authority for their text, so that no textual problem concerning them arises; nor is the question of whose hand transcribed the first nine relevant, for it is pretty clear that, whoever wrote them, they are a careful copy of Donne's originals.

If these conclusions are sound, the importance of the Lothian MS. is threefold: (1) it provides a new sermon by Donne; (2) it shows that some one, himself a preacher, had access to Donne's MSS. and was allowed to make copies of them during the summer of 1624; (3) it provides a new authority for the text of eight of Donne's sermons.

It may now be worth while to give a conspectus of those of Donne's sermons for which there is more than one seventeenth-century text in existence.

Deaths Duell, 1632 = XXVI, no. 26 (25 Feb. 1630/1).

Six Sermons, 1634, no. 1 = *Fifty Sermons*, no. 28 (Apr. 1629).

no. 2 = „ „ no. 29 (? Apr. 1629).

no. 3 = „ „ no. 3 (date uncertain).

no. 4 = *Fifty Sermons*, no. 35 = Lothian,
no. 2 [? = Dowden] (?).²

no. 5 = *Fifty Sermons*, no. 12 = Lothian,
no. 3 [? = Dowden] (1616–22).

no. 6 = *Fifty Sermons*, no. 13 = Lothian,
no. 4 [? = Dowden] (1616–22).

Sapientia Clamitans, 1638 = XXVI, no. 19 = Lothian, no. 5 =
Ashmole 781 [? = Dowden] (18
Apr. 1619).

¹ The style and matter of the sermon, though not equal to Donne's best, confirm his authorship.

² Dated in *Fifty Sermons*, 'Feb. 21. 1611'. This must be wrong, since Donne was not ordained till Jan. 1614/5. The sermon was transcribed into the Lothian MS. on '5^o Idus-Aug [1624]', so that the MS. provides a new *terminus ante quem*.

LXXX, no. 74 = Lothian, no. 7 [? = Dowden] (30 Apr. 1620).

Fifty Sermons, no. 16 = Lothian, no. 6 [? = Dowden] (1616-22).

XXVI, no. 4 = Lothian, no. 8 [? = Dowden] (16 Feb. 1620/1).

XXVI, no. 5 = XXVI, no. 16 (12 Feb. 1629/30).

XXVI, no. 3 = XXVI, no. 17 (20 Feb. 1628/9).

Lothian, no. 9 = Dowden (1616-22).

Much might be discovered about the genesis of the text of Donne's sermons by carefully comparing these texts, and by investigating the differences in typography (spelling, capitals, italics, punctuation) between different sermons in the folios. The grouping of sermons in the folios and the recurrence of certain pairs of sermons in the same order in MS. and print might also afford useful indications. This paper cannot anticipate the results of such an inquiry, but one or two suggestions, resulting from a cursory examination, may be made:

1. The Dowden and Lothian MSS. agree so closely in the text of the sermon which they are known to have in common that it is likely that they are respectively a professional and an amateur copy of the same original, and that the remaining seven sermons by Donne in the Dowden MS. are the seven published sermons by Donne contained in the Lothian MS. (This possibility has been indicated in the list above.) [The suggestion is confirmed by the news that the same eight sermons as are contained in the Dowden MS. also occur in the Payne-Collier MS. ' = Payne-Collier' may be inserted after 'Dowden' in the conspectus given above, and the '?' may almost certainly be deleted.]

2. Mrs. Simpson plausibly suggested¹ that *Sapientia Clamitans* and Ashmole 781 were founded on the shorthand notes of two reporters who actually heard XXVI, no. 19, preached. Mrs. Simpson has herself modified this suggestion in view of the fact that the Lothian MS. follows the 'short-hand' version so closely that (on this hypothesis) we should

¹ *Study of the Prose Works of John Donne*, pp. 260 sqq.

have to suppose that Donne memorized the sermon minutely and was able to write out a copy almost as exact as a *verbatim* report. This is not impossible and it may still be that the source of *Sapientia Clamitans* and Ashmole 781 is oral, and that of the Lothian MS. a copy written by Donne before or immediately after delivery; but it is more likely that all three go back to Donne's notes or his first written draft of the sermon. XXVI, no. 19 is, in any case, the same sermon 'exscribed' and revised and expanded in the process.

3. XXVII, no. 16 is the same sermon as XXVI, no. 5. A comparison of the texts suggests that this repetition did not occur because the same copy was printed twice, but because two different copies were inadvertently supposed to be of different sermons; and, further it seems that those copies were an ordinary copy (no. 16) and an 'exscribed' copy (no. 5) respectively. If so, the exscribing in this case meant the writing out, without any substantial change (except the introduction of a fuller and more formal heading), of the original copy with systematic capitals, italics, and punctuation. If space permitted, this might be vividly shown by printing paragraphs from the two versions side by side.¹ Comparison further reveals that where there is any substantial variation, almost invariably, no. 5 is right, and it seems that the errors of no. 16 result from the misreading of a closely and not clearly written original.

4. *Deaths Duell*. A cursory examination of the two texts is enough to reveal that the folio text is not merely a revised version of 1682, and that to reach the true text corrections from both must be incorporated;² nor does it seem that the two texts have an immediate common ancestor.

5. For three sermons three texts exist: *Six Sermons*, *Fifty*

¹ I believe that this comparison, and a more extended study of the typography of XXVI, would show that the differences are due to this fact, and did not arise because the printing of the XXVI *Sermons* became less careful as the volume advanced.

² The variants are more numerous and important than is indicated by the list given in the Nonesuch Press's *Poetry and Prose of Donne*, 1930, which provides the only collation known to me.

Sermons, and the Lothian MS. A collation of the texts of the last two sermons in *Six Sermons* (*Fifty Sermons*, nos. 12 and 13), with the other two texts shows conclusively that *Fifty Sermons* is not a reprint of *Six Sermons*, and some of the variants are such that it is impossible to suppose that they have an immediate common ancestor. The Lothian MS. agrees almost, but not quite, invariably with *Fifty Sermons*, and these two provide the better text.

6. It seems probable from the fact that none of the sermons printed in Donne's lifetime were reprinted in the folios, that he destroyed the MS. copies of his printed sermons.

To conclude: the material for a study of the text of Donne's sermons since the bringing to light of the Lothian MS. should be enough, if the texts are minutely compared and what is known of Donne's method of delivery is borne in mind, to reveal much that is new about the MSS. on which our texts of the sermons are founded.

JOHN SPARROW.

A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY MANUSCRIPT OF POEMS BY DONNE AND OTHERS¹

THERE has lately come to light a seventeenth-century poetical manuscript of unusual interest. It consists, in the main, of an anthology of late Elizabethan and Jacobean verse, written in a beautiful Italian hand, bound in contemporary calf, octavo size, with gold stamps, and in excellent repair. It is compiled, for the main part, from reliable manuscript sources; a deduction which it is possible to draw from various points of evidence within the manuscript itself. Here and there a word has been omitted and a space left, where the copyist has been unable to decipher the handwriting of the previous scribe. Poems, such as Corbett's, which were not in print in a collected form till 1647, appear here in considerable number and excellent condition; and poems already in print appear here under unfamiliar headings. Thus, Shakespeare's second sonnet: *When forty Winters shall besiege thy brow*, appears as 'A Lover to his Mistres', and the text certainly owes nothing to the printed version. The poems have obviously been transcribed in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, by some one who knew and appreciated the poetry of his contemporaries, and included their poems among others of earlier date. These copies were probably made over a considerable period, as the manuscript is arranged on a curious plan. It is divided into sections: Epitaphs, laudatory and satirical; Love sonnets; Satires; Miscellanea; Serious Poems; Merry Poems; and at the end of each section, a space of several blank pages has been left, in order that

¹ This Manuscript was lent by an undergraduate, Mr. T. O. W. Glass, whose father acquired it with Taverham Hall near Norwich, to Mr. Salter, of Magdalene College, Cambridge, who very kindly gave Professor Grierson the opportunity of examining and reporting upon it. Great pressure of work made this impossible, and Professor Grierson, with Mr. Salter's consent, has delegated the task to me.—H. H. W.

poems might be added later. Further, the hand, though mainly the same, varies in size and character, as though entries had been made at different times. One or two poems and a deal of prose have been added at a later date, in an untidy English hand, but in the original entries there is nothing to suggest a later date than 1630.

I have mentioned a version of a Shakespeare sonnet, which differs considerably from the 1609 print. It will be easier to give the sonnet than the variants:

W. S.

A Lover to his Mistres.

When forty winters shall beseige thy brow,
And trench deepe furrows in that lovely Feild;
Thy youths faire livery so esteemed now,
Shalbee (like rotten weeds) of no worth held.

Then being askt, where all thy beauty lies?
Where's all the lustre of thy youthfull daies?
To say within these hollow sunken eies,
Were an all-eaten truth, and worthles praise.

Oh how much better were thy beauties use,
If thou couldst say this prettie child of mine
Saves mine account, and yeilds mee an excuse:
Making his beauty by succession thine.

This were to bee new borne, when thou art old;
And see thy blood warme when thou feelst it cold.

Two other poems in the manuscript are ascribed to Shakespeare. They are epitaphs, on Sir Edward and Sir Thomas Stanley of Tong, unidentified members of the family of Sir Kenelm Digby's wife, the beautiful and ill-starred Lady Venetia. Little can be said in their behalf, except that they are not unworthy of the poet of *Good frend for Iesus sake forbear*, whose authenticity has had some support:¹

¹ Since this article was written, Sir E. K. Chambers has printed these two epitaphs (*William Shakespeare*, i, p. 551) from a manuscript known to Halliwell-Phillipps and ascribed by him to the early part of the reign of Charles I. The manuscript of which I write belongs to the same period and has almost identical readings. Those interested in the date, the subjects, and the authenticity of the epitaphs, or the pedigree of the Stanleys, are referred to Chambers's work.

Shakespeare An Epitaph on S^r Edward Standley
 Ingraven on his Toombe
 in Tong Church.

Not monumentall Stone preserves our Fame,
 Nor sky-aspiring Pyramids our name ;
 The memory of him for whom this stands,
 Shall outlive Marble, and defacers hands :
 When all to Times consumption shalbee given,
 Standley for whom this stands shall stand in heaven.

Idem, ibidem On S^r Thomas Standley.

Aske who lies here, but do not weepe,
 Hee is not dead, hee doth but sleepe ;
 This Stony Register is for his Bones,
 His Fame is more perpetuall, then these Stones :
 And his owne goodnes with himselfe being gone
 Shall live, when earthly monument is none.

The Raleigh interest of the manuscript is considerable. It contains eight poems attributed to his authorship, of which two have never before been ascribed to him and are not printed in the list of poems ascribed to Raleigh at the end of Hannah's introduction to the *Poems of Wotton, Raleigh and others*. Neither of these poems is any more unworthy of his parentage than a number of verses admitted by Hannah, and Raleigh's most recent editor, Miss Lathom :

S^r W. R. To his love when hee had obtained her.

Now Serena, bee not coy ;
 Since wee freely may enjoy
 Sweet embraces : such delights
 As will shorten tedious nights.
 Thinke that beauty will not stay
 With you alwaies, but away ;
 And that tyrannizing face
 That now holds such perfect grace,
 Will both changd and ruind bee :
 So fraile are all things that wee see,
 So subject unto conquering Time.
 Then gather flowers in their prime,

Let them not fall and perish so ;
 Nature her bounties did bestow
 On us that wee might use them : And
 'Tis coldnes not to understand
 What Shee and Youth and Forme perswade
 With Opportunity that 's made
 As wee could wish it. Let 's then meete
 Often with amorous lippes, and greet
 Each other till our wanton kisses
 In number passe the daies Ulysses
 Consum'd in travaile, and the starrs
 That looke upon our peacefull warrs
 With envious lustre. If this store
 Will not suffice, wee'le number o're
 The same againe ; untill wee find
 No number left, to call to mind ;
 And shew our plenty. They are poore,
 That can count all they have, and more.

The other is of a very different character, but it is no less characteristic of the author of 'The Lie'.

S^r W. R. An old and True Prophesey.

Before the sixth day of the next new yeare,
 Strange wonders in this kingdome shall appeare.
 Foure Kings shalbee assembled in this Isle,
 Where they shall keepe great tumults for a while ;
 Many shall then bee eas'd of many crosses,
 And many likewise shall susteine great losses :
 Full many a Christian heart shall quake for feare,
 The dreadfull sound of Trumpe when they shall heare.
 Dead bones shall then bee tumbled upp and downe
 In every City and in every Towne ;
 By day by night this tumult shall not cease,
 Untill an Herald shall proclaime a Peace :

A Herald strange, the like was never borne,
 Whose very Beard is Flesh, whose Mouth is Hörne.

The play upon the terms of card-play is obvious, but the secondary meaning of the poem, further than ridicule of the Almanackers, I cannot make out. Miss Lathom has been unable to identify the Dr. Latworthe to whom in several MSS. (RP 212, RP 172, Ashmole 781) the *Soules Errand*—

'Gee soule the bodies guest'—is attributed; and she is driven to identify him with Dr. Lapworth, of Corpus Christi College, Doctor of Physic, and later Master of Magdalen, Oxford. Since he was 'a scholar and something of a poet . . . it is natural to suppose', writes Miss Lathom, 'that he is the Dr. Latworthe'. But he is not. In the MS. before me, the poem is headed: *Satyra Volans. Or A flying Satyre made by Dr. Latewarr of St. John's*, information regarding whom may easily be had in Antony Wood, and it is hardly necessary to recapitulate it here. For other poems by both doctors, Lapworth and Latewarr, the curious are referred to the manuscript of which I write. Before leaving the *Errand*, it would be as well to note that in line 9, this MS. offers a more probable reading than any of the authorities hitherto available: 'Say to the Church it *knowes*'—(in place of *showes*) and that in two places it supports a reading that Miss Lathom has rejected, to the detriment of the sense. In line 16, surely the reading 'a Faction' is better than 'affection', even in the old sense: and in line 75, 'although', which has the support of every authority except that from which Miss Lathom prints, makes better sense than 'because'. The poem, *What is our Life? the Play of Passion*, which has been variously attributed to Raleigh, Donne, and others, is given to Ben: Stone, some of whose other verses in the MS. are printed in *Parnassus Biceps*, with a note on the author by Mr. Thorn-Drury, the editor of the modern reprint. *Thou sentst to me a heart was crowned*, usually ascribed to Ayton, though the text of Ayton is still unsettled and is likely to remain so, is here attributed to Raleigh. There is no mention of it in Hannah's list, or in other editors. Finally, the poem, *Nature that washt her hands in milke*, is here printed with the heading, *On his Mistresse Serena*, with the last stanza, *O cruell Time*, with the final couplet, *But from this Earth*, and with a marginal note: 'This last staffe was said to bee made by Sr W. R. a little before his death, wth the addition of these last two verses.' Of the three MSS. known to Miss Lathom, one is short by three verses, and none has the last couplet.

The Donne items are still more numerous, but they do not shed so much light on the text. In the section devoted to Panegyricks, occurs *The Praise of an old Woman*, which reads, at line 4,

Her Lipps though Ivory, yet her Teeth are Jett :

An antithesis between ivory lips and teeth of jet, satisfies the sense better than the idea of ivory eyes, which are already contrasted in size with her mouth. In this case, *Though they bee Dimme*, in the next line, refers not to her eyes, but, with greater probability, to her teeth. There are in all seventeen ascriptions to Donne in the MS., to say nothing of several verses 'in imitation of Dr. Dunne', but by far the most interesting item is not by Donne at all. Readers will remember that among the Divine Poems of Donne appears one addressed to a *Mr. Tilman after he had taken Orders*. In his note on the poem, Professor Grierson wrote: 'Of Mr. Tilman I can find no trace in printed Oxford or Cambridge registers.' Here, side by side with a manuscript version of Donne's poem, appears another by Mr. Tilman himself; *Mr. Tilman of Pembroke Hall in Cambridge his motives not to take orders*, which is the obvious occasion of Donne's epistle. The poem sheds little further light on Mr. Tilman's identity, but is a pretty fair clue to his character, his scruples (which were great), and his poetical quality (which was not). Students of Donne will be glad of the opportunity to examine the document for themselves.

Mr. Tilman of Pembroke Hall in Cambridge his motives
not to take orders.

Stay ; but may such a motion bee withstood,
Or thus disputed whether bad or good ?
Oh quench not Vestall tapers ; Can I find
'Mongst cloddy embers in a sensuall mind
Such sparks at pleasure ? Could Prometheus then
Steale fire but once, and bring't from Heaven to men ?

Treasure of mysteries, the will and witt
Of Him that gott a Wisdome infinite,
Celestiall deepest knowledge, heavenly aire
Tun'd by the quire of Angels ! Could I dare

To thinke my selfe as fitt as Thou art good,
I'de claspe as close as Ivy to the Wood.
Say unrepented Plough, eternall Yoke,
From whence to turne an eye were to provoke
A Thunderbolt; who is not loath to part
With the Feesimple of His Will and Heart,
Wch throbbs and pants for feare to bee brought under
A guest whom no plea can dispart asunder?
Death and Divorcement helpe a loathsome Bedd,
A Nullity quits cleare; If chance I spedd,
This is as fixt as Center, all from hence
Do move and vary like Circumference.
Tell mee my selfe, if in my selfe I know
A power unchangeable: my selfe saies no.

Say may two wanton eies that lust and gaze,
And like to marriage torches ever blaze,
(Whose large Horizon is as unconfin'd
As Fame and Beauty) bee with Thee combin'd?
No; but the Monarchy of soveraigne Reason
Is rul'd by Thee without the Senses treason.
Most hallowed Science! Thou dost teach the eye
To view a face without Idolatry;
Like some old Grandsire in an Hermitage,
Or gummy eyepits frozen upp with age:
If all were learn'd thy Virgin contemplation,
The World would want successive propagation.
Tell mee my selfe, if in my selfe I know
Concupiscence asswag'd: my selfe saies no.

Turne in mine eies, but oh returne againe;
I see a Gall brimme full, and every veine
Swolne bigg and boyling, wrongs unsatisfied
Steep't in Revenge: So have I often spied
Neptune (as Bedlams use) in angry seas
Slubber the stubborne rocks with foamy leas.
Sweet Art! Thy gentle spiritt nor in Wind,
Nor fiery flashes doth direct to find,
But in a voice as still as humming Bees
The God, that walk't ith' coole amongst the Trees;
Thou setlest wrath, and teachest it to fly
Like moths about a lampe, bee scorch't and dy:

The Lambe my Sacrifice did bleate the word
 Ledd to bee slaine, Peter put upp thy sword.
 Tell mee my selfe, if in my selfe I know
 A spirit so mild (?)¹ and soft : my selfe saies no.¹

Is here my Dixi ? No ; Dull Ignorance,
 Where 's stiffe Ambition ? Or doth it advance
 His head like glorious Sinners, 'mongst the Peeres,
 That trespasse most without rebuke or feares ?
 I tell thee Gyant Vice, th' art naught and mine ;
 Witnes at every great one I repine :
 Witnes that I forgett that I am Hee,
 And wish that others might remember mee.
 Refined Faculty, Thou art not rash,
 But dost informe this Clay, that every dash
 Can breake itt ; that 'tis molded, fram'd, and borne
 At th' Potters will to Honour or to Scorne :
 Thy Paradoxe to teach men to aspire
 Is, Friend sitt lower, that thou maist sitt higher.
 Tell mee my selfe, if in my selfe I know
 Supple Humility : my selfe saies no.

A thousand Sinnes sleepe nameles, 'tis alone
 A thousand, that of many I know none
 But these ; and these may begett more and worse,
 Sinne is a fruitfull mother, 'tis her curse :
 And some will this amongst my sinns rehearse,
 That stead of Prayer I tell my Faults in verse.
 Now judge my selfe, if in my selfe I know
 Fitnes for sacred calling : God knows no.

The only new attributions to Donne are two sets of Mortality and Resurrection verses, such as were common enough at the time. Similar sets appear in the editions of Strode and King.

For an editor of Corbett this manuscript is of the utmost value. It has about a dozen poems of his, as well as poems relating to Corbett, and verses by Lushington, Strode, Duppa, Juxon, and the other clerical poets of the day. In smaller numbers, poems by Jonson, Hoskins, King, and others, with

¹ The MS. is not clearly legible here. The line has been scraped and rewritten.

epitaphs, initialled C. R., and mostly derived from Camden's *Remains*, make up the rest of the volume.

One other poem in the manuscript is of considerable interest. It is unsigned, but bears the heading, *The Earle of Essex his Bee*; and seems, to judge by its frequent appearances in manuscript collections, to have enjoyed an extraordinary popularity. Mr. R. Warwick Bond, in his edition of the works of Lyly, cites thirteen manuscripts in which the poem appears in various degrees of completeness. In John Dowland's *Third and Last Booke of Songs or Aires* (Feb. 1603), the first three stanzas of the poem are printed. Mr. Warwick Bond claims the poem for Lyly on the strength of a single manuscript ascription, made in a different hand from that in which the poem is written. Of the other twelve manuscripts cited by him, three or four have no indication of authorship, three are signed 'E', and the rest, with one exception, are either headed or subscribed with Essex's name. The Rawl. MS. Poet. 112 includes it with another poem under the heading, *Verses or English Poemes written by the Lo: the E: of E:* and Rawl. MS. Poet. 172 gives the heading, *My Lord of Essex his Bee*, a superscription almost identical with that of our manuscript. The Collier MS. has the subscription, *R. Devereux, Essex*; and the Sloane MS. 1303 is headed, *The Earle of Essex his Buzze w^{ch} he made vpon some discontentment he receiued, a little before his iourney into Ireland. Año Dñi 1598*. Finally, the Egerton MS. 923, though unsigned, has the heading, *A Poem made on Robt. Devorex Earle of Essex by Mr. Henry Cuff his Chaplaine*. Versions of the poem are printed in Park's edition (1806) of Walpole's *Royal and Noble Authors*, and Grosart's Fuller Worthies *Miscellanies*, as Essex's. There are excellent grounds for regarding with suspicion poems of this sort, which deal with the fortunes or misfortunes of a popular figure, and are ascribed to his authorship. Poems of this kind attached themselves to the names of Raleigh and Buckingham, for example, which were certainly not theirs. But the internal evidence on which Mr. Warwick Bond denies the poem to Essex is of the slightest, and, in the face of so many ascriptions, will hardly serve.

The references to tobacco, bees, &c., are not extraordinary, and the two stanzas concerning the 'caterpillar' are more likely to refer to Raleigh than any one else. And resemblances to Lyly's poetical style can scarcely be used as evidence until we have a larger and better authenticated body of Lyly's verse with which to compare it. Here, at any rate, is another witness (for what it is worth) to Essex's authorship, and that in a version of the poem at least as good as the best hitherto known. The poem, as given here, requires less help from the other manuscripts than any other. Whether or not Essex wrote the poem, the weight of the evidence forces us to connect it with his name; and it is more than possible that some one associated with him (Henry Cuff or another) is the author. But there is little or nothing in the poem itself to discredit Essex's own claim. Devereux was never done sulking, on some slight provocation or another, and the peevish tone, the vainglorious attitude, and the surly attack on Raleigh, are all thoroughly in character.

The Earle of Essex his Bee

There was a Time when silly Bees could speake,
 And in that Time I was a silly Bee;
 Who fedd on Time untill my heart 'gan breake,
 Yet never found the Time to favour mee:
 Of all the Swarme I onely could not thrive,
 Yet brought I waxe and hony to the hive.

Then thus I buzz'd when Time no sapp would give;
 Why should this blessed Time to mee bee dry?
 Sith by this Time the lazy Drones do live,
 The Waspe, the Worme, the Gnatt, the Butterfly:
 Mated with Griefe I kneeled on my knees,
 And thus complain'd mee to the King of Bees.

God graunt my Liege this Time may never end,
 And yet vouchsafe to heare my plaint of Time;
 Wch every fruitles Flie hath found a Friend,
 And I cast downe when Atomies do climbe:
 The King replies but this, Peace peevish Bee,
 Th' art bound to serve the Time, the Time not Thee.

The Time not Thee ? This word clipp't short my wings,
And made mee Wormelike creepe that earst could fly ;
Awfull regard disputeth not with Kings,
Receiveth a repulse not asking why :
Then from that Time a time I mee withdrew
To feed on Henbaw [*sic*], Hemlock, Nettles, Rew.

But from these leaves no dramme of sweet I draine,
My headstrong Vertues did my Braine bewitch ;
The juice disperst, black blood in every veine,
For Hony, Gall, for Waxe I gathered Pitch :
My Combe a Rift, my Hive a Leafe must bee,
So changd Bees scarcely tooke mee for a Bee.

I worke on weeds when Moone is in the waine,
Whilst all the Swarme in Sunneshine tast the Rose ;
On black root Fearne I seeke and suck my bane,
Whilst on the Eglentree the rest repose :
Having too much they still repine for more,
And cloid with fatnes surfett on their store.

Swolne fatt with Feasts, full merrily they passe
In sweetned clusters falling from a Tree ;
Where leaving mee to nibble on the grasse,
Some scorne, some muse, and some do pittie mee :
Some envy mee, and whisper to the King
Some must bee killd and some must have no sting.

Are Bees growne Waspes and Spiders to afflict ?
Do Hony Bowells make the Spirits Gall ?
Is this the juice of Flowers to stirr suspect ?
Ist not enough to tread on them that fall ?
What sting hath Patience but a sighing grieve,
Weh stings nought but it selfe without releife.

True Patience the provender [of] Fooles,
Sadd Patience that wasteth at the doore ;
Patience that learnes thus to conclude in Schooles,
Patient I am therefore I must bee poore :
Great King of Bees that rightest every wrong,
Listen to Patience in her dying song.

I cannot feed on Fennell like some Flies,
 Nor fly to every Flower to gather gaine;
 Mine appetite waites on my Princes eies,
 Contented with contempt, and pleas'd with paine:
 And yet expecting of a happy hower,
 When Hee shall say, That Bee may suck a Flower.

Of all the griefes that do my Patience grate,
 There's one that fretteth in the highest degree;
 To see some Caterpillers crept of late,
 Cropping the Flowers that should sustaine the Bee:
 Yet smiled I for that the wisest knows,
 That moths do frett the Cloth, Cankers the Rose.

Once did I see by flying in the Field,
 Foule Beasts to know and brouze on Lillies faire;
 Vertue and Beauty could no succour yield,
 All's provender to Asses but the Aire:
 The partiall world of this takes little heed,
 To give them Flowers that should on Thistles feed.

Thus onely I must draine Egyptian Flowers,
 Having no sweetnes, bitter sapp they have;
 And seeke out rotten Toombes the dead mens Bowers,
 And feed on [*blank in MS.*] growing by the grave:
 If this I cannot have poore, harmeles Bee,
 Wished Tobacco I will fly to Thee.

What though Thou diest my lungs in deepest Black?
 A Sable Habitt fitts a Mournefull Heart;
 What though Thy Fumes sound Memory do crack?
 Forgetfullnes is fittest for my smart:
 O vertuous Fume let it bee carv'd in Oke,
 That Words, Hopes, Witt, and all the World is Smoke.

Five yeares twice told with promises perfum'd,
 My hope-stufft head was cast into a slumber;
 Sweet dreames of Gold, on dreames I then presum'd,
 Among the Bees I thought my selfe in number:
 Waking I found high Hopes did make mee faine,
 'Twas not Tobacco stupified my braine.

INGENIUM, STUDIUM, NUMMOS, SPEM, TEMPUS, AMICOS
 QUUM MALE PERDIDERIM; PERDERE VERBA LEVE EST.

CONTENTS

OF PREVIOUS VOLUMES

VOL. I, 1910

COLLECTED BY A. C. BRADLEY

- I. ENGLISH PLACE-NAMES. HENRY BRADLEY.
- II. ON THE PRESENT STATE OF ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION.
ROBERT BRIDGES.
- III. BROWNING. W. P. KER.
- IV. BLIND HARRY'S *WALLACE*. GEORGE NEILSON.
- V. SHAKESPEARE AND THE GRAND STYLE.
GEORGE SAINTSBURY.
- VI. SOME SUGGESTIONS ABOUT BAD POETRY. EDITH SICHEL.
- VII. CARLYLE AND HIS GERMAN MASTERS. C. E. VAUGHAN.

VOL. II, 1911

COLLECTED BY H. C. BEECHING

- I. JANE AUSTEN. A. C. BRADLEY.
- II. RICHARDSON'S NOVELS AND THEIR INFLUENCE. F. S. BOAS.
- III. THE LITERARY PLAY. C. E. MONTAGUE.
- IV. DESCRIPTION IN POETRY. A. CLUTTON-BROCK.
- V. THE GRAND STYLE: AN ATTEMPT AT A DEFINITION.
JOHN BAILEY.
- VI. A YORKSHIRE FOLK-PLAY AND ITS ANALOGUES.
F. W. MOORMAN.
- VII. THE PARTICLE *ING* IN PLACE-NAMES. HENRY ALEXANDER.

VOL. III, 1912

COLLECTED BY W. P. KER

- I. WHAT ENGLISH POETRY MAY STILL LEARN FROM GREEK.
GILBERT MURRAY.
- II. SOME CHILDISH THINGS. A. A. JACK.
- III. *A LOVER'S COMPLAINT*. J. W. MACKAIL.
- IV. ARNOLD AND HOMER. T. S. OMOND.
- V. KEATS'S EPITHETS. DAVID WATSON RANNIE.
- VI. DANTE AND THE GRAND STYLE. GEORGE SAINTSBURY
- VII. BLAKE'S RELIGIOUS LYRICS. H. C. BEECHING.

VOL. IV, 1913

COLLECTED BY C. H. HERFORD

- I. A NOTE ON DRAMATIC CRITICISM. J. E. SPINGARN.
- II. ENGLISH PROSE NUMBERS. OLIVER ELTON.
- III. SOME UNCONSIDERED ELEMENTS IN ENGLISH PLACE-
NAMES. A. MAWER.
- IV. PLATONISM IN SHELLEY. L. WINSTANLEY.
- V. DEFOE'S *TRUE-BORN ENGLISHMAN*. A. C. GUTHKELCH.
- VI. THE PLAYS OF MR. JOHN GALSWORTHY. A. R. SKEMP.
- VII. DRAMATIC TECHNIQUE IN MARLOWE. G. P. BAKER.

VOL. V, 1914

COLLECTED BY OLIVER ELTON

- I. RHYTHM IN ENGLISH VERSE, PROSE, AND SPEECH.
D. S. MACCOLL.
- II. THE NOVELS OF MARK RUTHERFORD. A. E. TAYLOR.
- III. ENGLISH PLACE-NAMES AND TEUTONIC SAGAS.
F. W. MOORMAN.
- IV. SHELLEY'S *TRIUMPH OF LIFE*. F. MELIAN STAWELL.
- V. EMILY BRONTË. J. C. SMITH.
- VI. TRANSLATION FROM OLD INTO MODERN ENGLISH.
A. BLYTH WEBSTER.

VOL. VI, 1920

COLLECTED BY A. C. BRADLEY

- I. THE 'CÆDMONIAN' GENESIS. HENRY BRADLEY.
- II. THE HUMANIST IDEAL. W. P. KER.
- III. TROLLOPE REVISITED. GEORGE SAINTSBURY.
- IV. ON PLAYING THE SEDULOUS APE. GEORGE SAMPSON.
- V. CONRAD. F. MELIAN STAWELL.
- VI. SOUTH-EASTERN AND SOUTH-EAST MIDLAND DIALECTS.
H. C. WYLD.

VOL. VII, 1921

COLLECTED BY JOHN BAILEY

- I. RHYME IN ENGLISH POETRY. B. DE SELINCOURT.
- II. WORDS AND MUSIC IN SONG. A. H. FOX STRANGWAYS.
- III. THOMAS PARNELL; OR, WHAT WAS WRONG WITH THE
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. A. H. CRUICKSHANK.
- IV. A CONTEMPORARY LIGHT UPON JOHN DONNE.
JOHN SAMPSON.
- V. A BUNDLE OF BALLADS. GEO. NEILSON.
- VI. THE 1604 TEXT OF MARLOWE'S *DOCTOR FAUSTUS*.
PERCY SIMPSON.

VOL. VIII, 1922

COLLECTED BY G. C. MOORE SMITH

- I. TRAGEDY. JOHN S. SMART.
- II. ON THE MEANINGS OF CERTAIN TERMS IN THE ANGLO-
SAXON CHARTERS. G. B. GRUNDY.
- III. THE FELON SEW. G. H. COWLING.
- IV. THE MYSTICAL ELEMENT IN ENGLISH POETRY.
A. HAMILTON THOMPSON.
- V. ROMANTICISM IN THE MODERN WORLD. C. H. HERFORD
- VI. HAZLITT. W. P. KER.
- VII. ENGLISH GRAMMAR AND GRAMMARS. R. B. MCKERROW.

VOL. IX, 1923

COLLECTED BY W. P. KER

- I. THE TROJANS IN BRITAIN. GEORGE GORDON.
- II. THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE OF THE *ANCREN RIWLE*.
DOROTHY M. E. DYMES.
- III. LONG WILL, DANTE, AND THE RIGHTEOUS HEATHEN.
R. W. CHAMBERS.
- IV. THE LIFE OF CHRIST IN THE BALLADS.
EDITH C. BATHO.
- V. JOSEPH WARTON: A Comparison of his *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, with his edition of Pope's *Works*.
EDITH J. MORLEY.
- VI. ON THE TEACHING OF CASE. J. H. G. GRATTAN.
- VII. THE MODERN CONSCIOUSNESS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE.
BARKER FAIRLEY.

VOL. X, 1924

COLLECTED BY E. K. CHAMBERS

- I. MARLOWE'S MAP. ETHEL SEATON.
- II. SPELLINGS AND MISPRINTS IN THE SECOND QUARTO OF
HAMLET. J. DOVER WILSON.
- III. A LIFE OF BISHOP CORBETT, 1582-1635. J. E. V. CROFTS.
- IV. SOME NOTES ON MILTON'S USE OF WORDS.
ELIZABETH HOLMES.
- V. REASON AND ENTHUSIASM IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.
OLIVER ELTON.
- VI. ALLAN RAMSAY AND THE ROMANTIC REVIVAL.
J. W. MACKAIL.

VOL. XI, 1925

COLLECTED BY OLIVER ELTON

- I. A FORGOTTEN POET OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.
L. C. MARTIN.
- II. THE WORDS AND THE PLAY. ALLAN MONKHOUSE.
- III. DICTION AND IMAGERY IN ANGLO-SAXON POETRY.
H. C. WYLD.
- IV. SENTIMENT AND SENSIBILITY IN THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY NOVEL. EDITH BIRKHEAD.
- V. THIS WORLD'S IDEAS OF THE NEXT. H. V. ROUTH.
- VI. CHAPMAN'S ETHICAL THOUGHT. JANET SPENS.

VOL. XII, 1926

COLLECTED BY JOHN BUCHAN

- I. MILTON'S LINES ON SHAKESPEARE. H. W. GARROD.
- II. THE ASSOCIATIONS OF THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK WITH WALES. HERBERT G. WRIGHT.
- III. PROPOSALS FOR A NEW EDITION OF JOHNSON'S LETTERS.
R. W. CHAPMAN.
- IV. THE *FAERIE QUEENE* AND ITS CRITICS.
H. CLEMENT NOTCUTT.
- V. CANADIAN LITERATURE: THE BEGINNINGS.
ARCHIBALD MACMECHAN.
- VI. SCOTTISH BALLADS: THEIR EVIDENCE OF AUTHORSHIP AND ORIGIN. ALEXANDER KEITH.

VOL. XIII, 1927

COLLECTED BY CAROLINE F. E. SPURGEON

- I. WYRD AND PROVIDENCE IN ANGLO-SAXON THOUGHT.
BERTHA S. PHILLPOTTS.
- II. JOHN OF SALISBURY. HELEN WADDELL.
- III. SIR THOPAS: A SATIRE. JOHN M. MANLY.
- IV. LA RÉACTION CONTRE LA CRITIQUE ROMANTIQUE DE
SHAKESPEARE. ÉMILE LEGOUIS.
- V. SCOTT AND CARLYLE. H. J. C. GRIERSON.
- VI. SHELLEY'S MENTAL PROGRESS. MARJORY A. BALD.
- VII. ENGLAND LANGUAGE CONDITIONS! LORD DUNSANY.

VOL. XIV, 1928

COLLECTED BY H. W. GARROD

- I. THE POET'S DICTIONARY. OLIVER ELTON.
- II. MARLOWE'S *TRAGICAL HISTORY OF DR. FAUSTUS*.
PERCY SIMPSON.
- III. JOHNSON'S *IRENE*. DAVID NICHOL SMITH.
- IV. CHARLOTTE BRONTË. JANET SPENS.
- V. TENNYSON AND WALES. HERBERT G. WRIGHT.
- VI. *ANCRENE WISSE* AND *HALI MEIÐHAD*. J. R. R. TOLKIEN.

VOL. XV, 1929

COLLECTED BY SIR HERBERT WARREN

- I. MATTHEW ARNOLD. MARGARET L. WOODS.
- II. THE ITALIAN ELEMENT IN ENGLISH. MARIO PRAZ.
- III. THOMAS PURNEY. H. O. WHITE.
- IV. A CHARACTERIZATION OF THE ENGLISH MEDIEVAL ROMANCES. DOROTHY EVERETT.
- V. THE REPUTATION OF ROBERT BROWNING.
D. C. SOMERVELL.
- VI. SOME KINDS OF POETIC DICTION. BERNARD GROOM.

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